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HERNAN CORTES.

Letters of Cortes

The Five Letters of Relation from Fernando Cortes to the Emperor Charles V.

Translated, and Edited, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes Compiled from Original Sources

By
Francis Augustus MacNutt

In Two Volumes

Volume One

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FRANCIS AUGUSTUS MacNUTT

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PREFACE

THE narrative contained in the Letters of Fernando Cortes is the first description ever written of the most highly developed civilisation on the continent of North America at the date of its discovery. Astronomical science has brought the existence of planets within common knowledge, and our imagination is already so familiar with the possibility of a Martian population, that a discovery positively demonstrating such a fact would be received as confirmatory rather than surprising. By the discoveries of Christopher Columbus, the civilisations of two worlds as absolutely strange to one another as different planets were brought into sudden contact productive of conflict and that conflict was naturally fiercest where the alien invaders were confronted by the best organised effort to contest their advance; hence the period of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, which is depicted by Cortes in these letters to Charles V. was prolific in deeds the most striking to the imagination of any that modern history records. No element of drama was absent, for the most heroic qualities, as well as the blackest passions of the human heart, were engaged on both sides in a life-and-death struggle, which culminated in an appalling race-tragedy, replete with epic horror. The piratical complexion of the Conqueror's initial movements forced him to wrest justification from success, and this was only made possible by the exercise of his indomitable courage, his relentless and unscrupulous diplomacy, and by that strange favour, which capricious Fortune sometimes destines as a reward for sheer audacity.

Fortunate for posterity was the anxious need of Cortes

to win royal approval for his lawless courses, for from it sprang the inspiration which prompted him to pen his descriptions of the Aztec civilisation at the zenith of its splendour and to report in detail to his sovereign the progress of his conquest.

Although historians have from the beginning recognised the superlative value of these letters and several editions of them are accessible to students familiar with the Spanish language, it has been left to my modest labours to provide an English translation of the complete series of *Relaciones*. The translation of sixteenth century Spanish into readable, modern English is not devoid of difficulty, though greater demands are made on the translator's patience and ingenuity than on his erudition.

Cortes wrote with soldier-like terseness, but his powers of observation were acute and accurate; hence his descriptions are both lucid and striking. His vocabulary was very limited, and as he was unfamiliar with the classical and scholastic styles of composition then in vogue amongst men of letters, his plain tale is ungarnished with the digressions into philosophy and theology and the lengthy citations from scripture and the classics, which abound in the more polished writings of his times. I suspect, moreover, that he had in mind to capture the fancy of the royal youth to whom he wrote, and, in days when novels were not, and court life must have weighed on a monarch of seventeen, still too young to be engrossed either in the delusive pleasures of private dissipation or in the absorbing intrigues of public ambition, many of his pages may have furnished the youthful sovereign with diverting reading in his leisure hours

I have aimed rather to preserve accuracy and the characteristics of Cortes's original style than to produce a more finished piece of English literature, by excessive rearrangement and the employment of a richer vocabulary than he commanded.

The subjects touched upon in the Letters are so little known to the general reader (though they constantly engage the attention of able specialists) that I have supplied notes to accompany the text, which are intended to explain and complete the narrative of Cortes. These notes deal with various and very large subjects, on some of which historical authorities are not in agreement, while on many others of the greatest interest and importance the last word has not yet been spoken. The statements I have made and the opinions I have expressed on these debatable questions are based upon the results of my researches in the works cited in the Bibliographical Note preceding the Letters: their scope is explanatory and complementary—not controversial.

The portrait of Cortes which appears as a frontispiece is after the alleged Titian, now in the possession of the Duque de Plasencia.

The portrait of Charles V. represents that monarch in his early youth, at the time when Cortes first began his correspondence; it is reproduced from a print in the British Museum.

The plan of the City of Mexico is taken from the *Historia Antigua* of Señor Manuel Orozco y Berra and the several maps are from the editions in which they originally appeared of the *Storia Antica del Messico* of Clavigero, 1780, Lorenzana's *Historia de Nueva Espana*, 1770, and of C. St. John Fancourt's *History of Yucatan from its Discovery to the Close of the Seventeenth Century.*

Since the days when those illustrious pioneers in this particular field of historical research, Washington Irving and William H. Prescott laboured with results that have won them enduring fame, the classification of the vast and scattered archives of Spain has gone steadily forward, with the result that the worker of to-day finds a mass of valuable material easily accessible that had formerly to be sought at great cost of time, labour, and expense in the

collections of state papers and correspondence which were not infrequently in a condition of disheartening and baffling confusion. The collections of inedited documents published by Rivadeneira under the title of *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, that of Navarrete published in Madrid in 1842, the *Biblioteca Occidental* of Barcia, the voluminous French translations of Ternaux-Compans, and finally the indefatigable labours of Señor Garcia Icazbalceta and Don Pascual Gayangos have cleared the modern student's path of formidable difficulties.

Although I am the fortunate possessor of a number of these valuable collections, I have likewise had to make researches in libraries and collections, both public and private, in Mexico, Spain, Italy, and England, in the course of which I have met with courteous and helpful encouragement from many to whom my sense of obligation is profound; but primarily I owe the pleasure and interest which the preparation of this work has afforded me to the late Abbé Augustin Fischer, sometime chaplain to the ill-fated Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, under whose cultured guidance it was my privilege to begin my studies in Spanish-American history. The death of my delightful and accomplished mentor, after a life of great vicissitudes, deprives me of one of the chief satisfactions which the publication of this work would otherwise have afforded me, but it does not lessen my obligation to pay a tribute of grateful thanks to his memory.

Francis A. MacNutt.

Palazzo Pamphilj,
Rome, October, 1907.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

FERNANDO CORTES, son of Martin Cortes y Monroy and of Catalina Pizarro Altamirano, his wife, was born in 1485 at Medellin, an unimportant town in Estremadura. The house in which he first saw the light stood in the Calle de la Feria until it was destroyed by the French in the campaign of 1809. (Alaman, *Dissertazioni sulla Storia del Messico;* Dissert. V.) Both his father's and his mother's families were of good descent, and respected, though poor. Martin Cortes had been a captain of fifty light cavalry, and he is further described by the anonymous author of *De Rebus Gestis* as "*pietate tamen et religione toto vitæ tempore clarus,*" while to his wife the same writer gives the highest praise, saying, "*Caterina namque probitate pudicitia et in conjugem amore nulli ætatis suae feminæ cessit.*" Las Casas also states that he had known Martin Cortes in a poor and humble condition, but that he was a *Cristiano viejo*, and said to be a gentleman. Later when the great fame of Cortes had converted him into an ancestor of whom the most illustrious family might be proud, ingenious genealogists sought to prove him also the descendant of very noble, and even royal, forefathers; but these unconvincing efforts must seem somewhat unimportant in the case of one whose name and place in history were won by his own achievements, unaided by the support either of influential family or superior fortune.

During his early childhood his health was so frail that he was several times thought to be at death's door. It seemed, therefore, all important to provide him with a powerful patron saint, who was finally chosen by drawing lots among the twelve apostles, the choice thus falling upon St. Peter, to whom Cortes rendered profound devotion during all his life and to whose protection he constantly attributed his victories.

When their son was fourteen years old, his parents sent him to the University of Salamanca to prepare himself for the practice of law, which was held in high esteem and opened a promising career to a young man of ability. During the two years he remained there, he lodged in the house of his paternal aunt, Inez de Paz, who was married to one Francisco Nuñez Valera. This brief course of study was sufficient to prove that he was in no way fitted for the profession his parents had chosen for him, so in 1501 he caused them the liveliest chagrin by returning to Medellin.

An idle year of rather disorderly life followed. The boy's taste was for arms and adventures, and, after hovering between the rival attractions of the Italian campaign under Gonsalvo de Cordoba, and those of service with Don Nicolas de Ovando, the recently appointed Governor of Hispaniola, he finally decided to join the latter, who was preparing to sail, with an important fleet of thirty ships, fitted out at the royal expense, to take possession of his office. In this he was urged, probably, by the consideration that the Governor was a family friend, who might be counted upon to advance his interests. Just before sailing, however, Cortes had the mishap of falling from a wall which he was scaling to keep an appointment with a lady, an accident which might have ended fatally for him but for the intervention of an old woman who, attracted by the noise of his fall at her very door, arrived just in time to

prevent her son-in-law from running him through the body as he lay prostrate. As it was, his bruises laid him up until after Ovando's fleet had sailed, and, upon his recovery, he went to Valencia with the intention of embarking for Italy to join the forces of the great Captain. What defeated his purpose is not recorded, but, upon his return to Medellin about a year later, his parents consented to his following Ovando and provided him with the money for his journey. He was thus enabled to sail from San Lucar de Barameda in 1504 on the trading vessel of one Alonzo Quintero of Palos, bound with four others carrying merchandise to the Indies.

The little fleet touched first at the Canaries which was the usual route. Alonzo Quintero was a shifty fellow, who, twice on the voyage, sought to overreach his brother captains by detaching himself from the fleet in the hope of making port ahead of them and disposing of his cargo to advantage and without their competition. Both times, however, untoward weather overtook him, and, the second time, his pilot, Francisco Niño, lost his bearings, and the ship, in a bad condition, short of water and provisions was like to be lost. At dawn on Good Friday a dove was seen perching on the rigging, and, by following the flight of the bird of good omen, land was sighted by Cristobal Zorno on Easter Day, and four days later, the weather-beaten craft reached port where the others of the fleet had long since arrived and disposed of their goods.

Seekers after signs and wonders were not slow to claim the appearance of this dove to guide Quintero's ship at such a critical moment as evidence of the celestial protection and miraculous intervention of providence in the direction of Cortes's fortunes, of which numerous other similar examples are cited, and to which he himself was always ready to ascribe his success; and, in the early chronicle, *De Rebus Gestis* of authoritative but unknown authorship, it is stated that, even at the time

of this occurrence, there were those present who claimed to recognise the Holy Ghost in the white-winged pilot sent to rescue the hapless ship.—"*Alius, Sanctum esse Spiritum, qui in illius alitis specie, ut mœstos et afflictos solaretur, venire erat dignatus.*"

The Governor being absent, his secretary, Medina, who already knew Cortes, met him upon his landing, and gave him hospitality in his house, acquainting him with the condition of things in the island, and advising him to settle near the town. To this Cortes is said to have replied that he had come to seek gold rather than to till the ground. During the war against Queen Anacoana of Hayti, which followed close upon his arrival, the horrors of which have been described first by Las Casas and later by Washington Irving, Cortes gave a very good account of himself, and upon the establishment of peace he received a grant of good land and a *repartimiento* of Indians at Daiguao where he was likewise appointed notary of the newly founded town of Azua. (Gomara, *Cronica*. Cap. 111; *De Rebus Gestis*). During the five or six ensuing years, his life was that of a planter, and was barren of any salient event, though Bernal Diaz says that he was involved in several affairs about women which led to quarrels and duels, in one of which he was wounded in the lip. He was prevented by an opportune illness from joining the luckless expedition of Alonso de Ojedo and Diego de Nicuesa to Darien. Don Nicolas de Ovando was succeeded in the office of Governor by Don Diego Columbus, who in 1511 fitted out an expedition for the conquest of Cuba, which he placed under the command of Don Diego Velasquez, and in which Cortes volunteered.

His conduct at this time advanced his interests in every respect, for his genial character and lively conversation soon made him a favourite with his companions in arms, while his bravery and address acquired him the best reputation as a soldier and attracted the attention of his

commander. This conquest afforded indeed but scanty opportunity either to the commander or the soldiers of the invading force to display their prowess, for the pacific natives were hunted through the island like timorous hares to yield after the feeblest resistance only. Thus they were brought into subjection with the barest semblance of serious military operations. Yet such mild warfare and the equally nerveless conflicts in the island of Hispaniola (San Domingo) supplied Cortes with the only training in campaigning he ever received. The skill he later displayed in military tactics, and his masterly generalship, were due to his latent genius, which sprang fully fledged into consciousness in response to the first demand made upon it, furnishing him liberally with an equipment for conquest which less gifted commanders must wrest from experience.

He received in recognition of his services in Cuba, an *encomienda* of Indians at Manicaro where he settled, becoming a citizen of Santiago. Gomara states that he was successful in the management of his estate, and was the first of the colonists to introduce certain breeds of sheep and cattle into the island. He had as his partner at Manicaro, Juan Xuarez.

Here may be said to close the first period of the life of Cortes, which might have been that of any spirited young Spaniard of his class and times, fretting within the restrictions of a provincial town, averse to the plodding career offered him by his parents, and finally cutting loose and winning his place in a new life in the colonies, by force of valour in feats of arms, and his ability in managing affairs.

CHAPTER II

COLONIAL LIFE IN CUBA

INFORMATION concerning the events of the first years of the residence of Cortes in the island of Cuba is scanty, but it may be assumed that he attended to his interests, which prospered, and enjoyed considerable popularity among his fellow-colonists as well as the favour of the Governor, Diego Velasquez, who extended a protecting friendship to him such as an older man of high rank might naturally feel for one of the most promising young men among his colonists. Mr. George Folsom, in the Introduction to his English translation of the *Despatches of Hernando Cortes* (New York, 1843), says that Velasquez was brother-in-law to Cortes, having married one of the Xuarez sisters. I have found no authority for this assertion, and, a few pages farther on, the same writer describes Velasquez as seeking to arrange a marriage for himself with a sister of the Bishop of Burgos. This alleged relationship between the two through their marriages is apocryphal.

As the changes which the relations between these two men underwent, worked powerfully and far upon the course of events in the New World, it is necessary before going further to consider somewhat the character of Diego Velasquez, and the causes which brought about the breach in their friendship. Oviedo states that Velasquez was of noble family, and, though arriving in the Indies poor, had there accumulated an ample fortune. His military experience had been gained by seventeen years

of service in European wars. The anonymous author of *De Rebus Gestis* confirms these points adding, "He was covetous of glory and somewhat more so of money." The latter also represents that an intimate friendship existed during several years between the two in Hispaniola, and that Velasquez had insisted on Cortes's joining his expedition, to which the latter counselled by friendship and his longing for adventures, readily consented. Velasquez had the habit of command, which as Governor of Cuba he exercised with the scarcely restricted and arbitrary freedom which his own temperament dictated, and the usage amongst Spanish colonial governors sanctioned. With all this he was amiable, accessible, and fond of dispensing favours. Prescott estimates him as one of those captious persons who "when things do not go exactly to their taste, shift the responsibility from their own shoulders where it should lie to those of others," and Herrera describes him as "ungenerous, credulous, and suspicious!" Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, who knew him personally in Cuba gives more place to his virtues in the description he has left of him, than do some others; while admitting that he was quick to resent a liberty, jealous of his dignity, easily taking offence, he adds that he was not vindictive nor slow to forgive. As an administrator of the affairs of the island he showed himself active and capable, encouraging immigration, assisting the colonists, and extending the zone of Spanish influence. He founded many towns, some of which still bear the names he gave them, notably Havana, Puerto del Principe, Matanzas, Trinidad, and Santiago where he had his seat of government. It appears therefore that Diego Velasquez was a man whose rather petty defects of character did not usually interfere with his public conduct and who discharged his official duties satisfactorily to the colonists and as a faithful representative of the crown. He was, however, unquestionably avaricious, egotistical, and

ambitious; withal no easy master to serve. Commenting on the reproaches he afterwards heaped upon Cortes for his ingratitude towards him, Oviedo says that it was no whit worse than his own had been towards his benefactor, Diego Columbus, and hence it was "measure for measure." His desire to explore and conquer by deputy, and to win distinction vicariously, was defeated by the impossibility of finding men possessed of the required ability to undertake successfully such ventures, combined with sufficient docility to surrender to him the glory and profits resulting from them.

The two fundamental versions of the historic quarrel between Cortes and Velasquez are contradictory. One is furnished by Gomara, the other by Las Casas, and, upon one or the other, later historians have based their accounts. The version of Las Casas is that of an eye-witness, for he was present in Cuba at the time, and knew both men well. He stood high in the favour of the Governor, but, even allowing something for the bias of personal friendship and possibly something more for the influence of Velasquez's position, his acknowledged integrity excludes the possibility of a conscious mis-statement of facts, and hence the greatest weight attaches to his testimony. Gomara, on the other hand, was never in Cuba in his life and only began his *Cronica de la Conquista* some twenty-five years or more after the events of which he wrote, under the inspiration and direction of Cortes, then Marques del Valle, whose chaplain he had shortly before become.

Gomara's chronicle was somewhat of the nature of an *apologia*, and it no sooner appeared than its accuracy and veracity were impugned by participants in the events he described; notably by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, whose work was undertaken for the declared purpose of correcting Gomara, and was called with emphasis the "True History" of the conquest. Gomara's account is briefly as follows: Cortes at that time paid court to Catalina

Xuarez la Marcaida, one of the poor but beautiful sisters of his partner in Manicaro, Juan Xuarez, and won such favours from the lady as entitled her to exact the fulfilment of a promise of marriage which she declared he had made her, but with which he refused to comply. The Xuarez family was from Granada and came originally in the suite of Doña Maria de Toledo, wife of the Viceroy Don Diego Columbus to Hispaniola, where it was hoped the four girls whose only dowry was their beauty might make good marriages among the rich planters. This hope was not realised in San Domingo and they removed to Cuba. Catalina, the eldest, was the most beautiful of all and had many admirers, amongst whom her preference fell upon Cortes, who was ever ready for gallant adventures. The matter was brought before the Governor who summoned Cortes *ad audiendum verbum*, influenced in Catalina's favour it was said, by one of her sisters to whose charms he himself was not indifferent. But, in spite of official pressure, Cortes refused to make the reparation exacted of him. Such high words followed that the Governor ordered him to be imprisoned in the fortress under the charge of the alcalde Cristobal de Lagos. His imprisonment was brief, for he managed to escape, carrying off the sword and buckler of his gaoler, and took sanctuary in a church, from which neither the promises nor the threats of Velasquez could beguile him. One day, however, when he unwarily showed himself before the church door, the alguacil Juan Escudero seized him from behind, and, aided by others, carried him on board a ship lying in the harbour. Cortes feared this foreshadowed transportation, and, setting his wits to work, he contrived to escape a second time, dressed in the clothes of a servant who attended him. He let himself down into a small skiff and pulled for the shore, but the strength of the current at that point, where the waters of the Macaguanigua River flow into the sea, was such that his frail craft capsized,

and he reached the shore swimming, with certain valuable papers tied in a packet on the top of his head. He then betook himself to Juan Xuarez, from whom he procured clothes and arms, and again took sanctuary in the church. These repeated escapes suggest sympathetic collusion on the part of his gaolers.

Velasquez professed to be won over by such bravery and resource, and sent mutual friends to make peace. But Cortes, although he married Catalina, refused the Governor's overtures and would not even speak to him, until, some Indian troubles breaking out, and Velasquez being at his headquarters outside the town, he somewhat alarmed the Governor by suddenly appearing before him late one night, fully armed, saying that he had come to make peace and to offer his services. They shook hands and spent a long time in conversation together, and slept that night in the same bed, where they were found next morning by Diego de Orellana who came to announce to the Governor that Cortes had fled from the church. This version is accepted by the author of *De Rebus Gestis* without reservation; Solis, while omitting the details, also dwells upon the intimate friendship existing between the two men.

Las Casas tells a different tale, in which no mention is made of the refusal to marry Catalina Xuarez as having any part in the quarrel, but asserts rather that Cortes was secretary to Velasquez, and that the news of the arrival of certain appellate judges in Hispaniola having reached Cuba, all the malcontents in the colony, and those disaffected towards Velasquez, began secretly to collect material on which to base accusations against him, and that Cortes, acting with them, had been chosen to carry this information to the judges. The Governor was informed of the plot, and arrested Cortes in the act of embarking, with the incriminating papers in his possession, and would have ordered him to be hanged on the spot but

for the intervention of his friends who pleaded for him. A memorial presented to the King on behalf of Velasquez by his chaplain Benito Martinez enumerates this, amongst other grievances of the Governor, and fully confirms the statement of Las Casas on this point. Las Casas admits the story of the imprisonment, the escape, and the sanctuary in the church, but he scouts the idea of any such reconciliation as Gomara describes, and says that the Governor, although he pardoned him, would not have him back as secretary, adding, "I saw Cortes in those days so small and humble that he would have craved the notice of the meanest servant of Velasquez."

Las Casas reminds his readers that Gomara wrote of things about which he knew only what Cortes and his adherents told him, and at a time when Cortes, who had risen from small beginnings to great rank and fame, was anxious to have his former humble condition forgotten. It should be borne in mind that Las Casas never ceased to regard Cortes as other than an exceptionally bold and lucky adventurer, nor did he ever miss an opportunity of recalling his humble origin and irregular beginnings. The wrath of Velasquez was short lived, for he afterwards made Cortes, alcalde, and stood godfather to one of his children. During the succeeding years the fortunes of Cortes improved, and he amassed a capital of some three thousand *castellanos*, of which Las Casas remarks "God will have kept a better account than I of the lives it cost." Though married reluctantly, he seems to have been contented, and he described himself to the bishop as just as happy with Catalina as though she were the daughter of a duchess (Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. iii, cap. xxvii.).

Don Manuel Orozco y Berra unhesitatingly accepts the version of Las Casas, and Prescott inclines also to the opinion that Gomara's account is improbable. Indeed he seeks to prove too much, and his description of the

reconciliation is overcharged, for the Governor was more than dignified—he was pompous, and something of a martinet in his ideas of discipline, being so tenacious of etiquette that no one, not even the first citizens in the colony sat uninvited in his presence. Nor had he ever stood in relations of equal comradeship to Cortes, however friendly he may have been, hence it is not to be imagined that he humbled himself to offer a reconciliation, being first rebuffed by his subordinate, and afterwards, when it suited the latter to present himself before him, that he celebrated the resumption of friendly relations with such demonstrations of affection and intimacy as Gomara describes. If the Gomara version is the true one, and the quarrel had no other origin than the hot words exchanged concerning Cortes's conduct in a private affair which, strictly speaking, was no concern of the Governor's, Velasquez might easily have forgiven and forgotten, especially as the lady's honour was saved, if but tardily. But if the statement of Las Casas is correct, and the Governor discovered his secretary in the act of plotting with his enemies for his overthrow, then Diego Velasquez must be considered to have been the most fatuous and frivolous of men. Magnanimity might prompt forgiveness of even such treachery, and Velasquez might choose to forget the falsity of a man whose enmity he could afford to ignore or despise, but to afterwards confide the most important venture of his life to such a one was a blunder, than which it would be difficult to imagine a greater. Yet Diego Velasquez's vast capacity for blundering enabled him even to do this.

Gold was the magnet which drew the Spanish adventurers to the New World, and though it had nowhere been found either so easily or so plentifully as they expected, enough had been discovered to whet their appetites for more. They lived in the midst of a world of mysterious possibilities which might any day by a lucky discovery

become realities. One navigator after another sailed the seas of unknown limits, discovered islands, landed on strange coasts, beheld primeval forests and lofty mountain-peaks clothed with untrodden snows, and, returning to the settlements on the islands, they brought back more or less accurate accounts of lands where gold and pearls were plentiful, peopled by natives eager to exchange these treasures for Spanish trinkets, at the same time producing enough specimens of precious metal to vouch for the truth of their descriptions. Rich colonists, as well as merchants in Cadiz and Seville, were easily found to risk funds in fitting out expeditions for the dual purpose of exploration and trade, while numberless were the skilful pilots, daring sailors, and bold soldiers of fortune ready to enlist for such service. After conquering Puerto Rico, Juan Ponce de Leon cruised among the Lucayan Islands, and in 1512, discovered the coast which he named Florida, where, instead of the fountain of eternal youth he sought, he met his death; in 1513, Balboa first beheld the Pacific Ocean from the mountain ridge on the isthmus of Darien; in 1515 Juan Diaz de Solis discovered the mouth of the river Plate.

In 1517 Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, a rich planter of Cuba, organised and equipped a fleet of three vessels, manned in part by some of the survivors of the first colony at Darien, and of which he himself took command. The principal object of this expedition was to capture Indians to be sold as slaves in Cuba, and the Governor furnished one ship on condition that he should be reimbursed in slaves (Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. i.). The first land discovered was a small island to which the name of *Las Mugeres* (Women's Island) was given, because of the images of female deities which they found in the temple there. This island lies off the extreme point of Yucatan, and from it the Spaniards saw what seemed to them a large and important city with many towers and

lofty buildings, to which they gave the fanciful name of *Grand Cairo*. They discovered the island of Cozumel, and, in a battle with the Indians at Catoche, they captured two natives who afterwards became Christians, baptised under the names of Julian and Melchor, and rendered valuable services as interpreters. Besides the coast of Yucatan, the most interesting discovery made by this expedition was the mysterious crosses which they found the Indians venerating at Cozumel. Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba died a few days after his arrival in Cuba from the wounds he had received at Catoche, and the other members of the expedition made their way back to Santiago where the spoils taken from the temples, the small quantity of gold, the two strange Indians, and most of all the marvellous tales of the men served to excite the eager cupidity of the colonists, ever ready to believe that *Eldorado* was found. The news spread throughout the islands, and even reached Spain and Flanders, where the young King Charles the First (the Emperor Charles V.), then was.

Diego Velasquez promptly organised an expedition to follow up these discoveries, and establish trading relations with the natives, which he placed under the command of his kinsman, Juan de Grijalba. It was composed of four ships, the *San Sebastian*, *La Trinidad*, *Santiago*, and *Santa Maria*. The captains under Grijalba were Francisco de Avila, Pedro de Alvarado, and Francisco de Montejo (Bernal Diaz, cap. viii; Oviedo, *Sumario*, lib. xvii., cap. viii., Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, vol. iv., cap. i). This fleet set sail on May 1, 1518, and after a fair voyage reached the island of Cozumel on May 3rd (*Itinerario de larmata del Re Cattolico apud Icazbalceta*, *Documentos Ineditos*, vol. i.).

Grijalba visited several points along the coast, giving Spanish names to various bays, islands, rivers, and towns. The Tabasco River, of which the correct Indian name

seems to have been *Tabzcoob*, received the name of Grijalba. On arriving at the river which they named Banderas, because of the numerous Indians carrying white flags whom they saw along the coast, they first heard of the existence of Montezuma, of whom these people were vassals, and by whom they had been ordered to keep a look out for the possible return of the white men, whose former visit to Cozumel had been reported to the Emperor. On the 17th of June, a landing was made on a small island, where the Spaniards first discovered proofs that human sacrifices and cannibalism were practised by the natives, for they found there a blood-stained idol, human heads, members, and whole bodies, with the breasts cut open and the hearts gone. They named the island *Isla de los Sacrificios* (Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. xiv.).

From the island which they named San Juan de Ulua (from the word *Culua* which they imperfectly caught from the natives), Grijalba sent Pedro de Alvarado on June 24th, with the *San Sebastian* to carry the results of his trading operations, and an account of his discoveries to Diego Velasquez, and to ask for an authorisation to colonise which had not been given in his original instructions, but which the members of the expedition exacted should now be granted (Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. iii., cap. cxii.).

Diego Velasquez had meanwhile felt some impatience, which gradually became alarm at hearing nothing from his expedition, so he sent Cristobal de Olid with a ship to look for it. Olid landed also at Cozumel, and took formal possession by right, as he supposed, of discovery. After coasting about for some time, and finding no traces of Grijalba, and having been obliged to cut his cables in a storm which had lost him his anchors, he returned to Cuba to augment the uneasiness of the Governor. At this juncture, however, Alvarado arrived with the treasure

and Grijalba's report, which threw the Governor into an ecstasy of hope, and plunged all the colony into the greatest excitement. Without waiting for more news, Velasquez set about preparing another expedition, and sent Juan de Saucedo to Hispaniola to solicit from the Jeronymite Fathers the necessary authority for his undertaking, whose objects it was stated were to look for Grijalba's lost armada, which might be in danger, to seek for Cristobal de Olid (notwithstanding he was already safely returned), and to rescue six Spanish captives who were said to be prisoners of a cacique in Yucatan. On October 5th, Grijalba arrived in Cuba with his ships, and was coldly received by the Governor, who professed himself much disappointed at the meagre results of the voyage, and criticised the captain severely for not having yielded to his companions' wishes to found a settlement on the newly discovered coast, despite his own instructions to the contrary.

Several names were under consideration for the commandership of the new armada but one after another was excluded, and the Governor's final choice fixed upon Fernando Cortes (Las Casas, lib. iii., cap. civ.; Bernal Diaz, cap. xix.).

This selection was attributed to the influence of Amador de Lares, a royal official of astute character who exercised a certain ascendency over Velasquez, and of Andres de Duero, the Governor's private secretary, both of whom Cortes had induced to present his name and secure his appointment, by promises of a generous share of the treasures to be discovered. Since both Grijalba and Olid were safely back in Cuba, the only one of the three reasons first advanced for this expedition which remained was the rescue of the Christian captives in Yucatan, and, although Velasquez had severely censured Grijalba for not establishing a colony or trading post somewhere, he also omitted this authorisation in his instructions

to Cortes. These instructions are dated October 23, 1518, and consist of thirty items of minute and tedious directions and counsels, covering every imaginable emergency. They are quoted in full in the *Documentos Ineditos del Archivo de Indias* in pages 59–79, inclusive, in the fourth volume of Orozco y Berra. The document opens by stating that the glory of God and the spread of the faith being the chief objects of the undertaking, only God-fearing and loyal men should be allowed to compose it; swearing and blasphemy against God, the blessed Virgin, and the saints are provided against by the severest penalties; the men are not to take concubines with them nor to give scandal by communication with native women; nor is gambling to be permitted in any form, dice being forbidden on board the ships. The exhaustive instructions concerning exploration and trading contain no mention of any authorisation to colonise, but very full powers are granted the commander to cover unforeseen cases.

Cortes threw himself heart and soul into the new enterprise which offered him exactly the opportunity in search of which he had come to the Indies fourteen years before. The mutual recriminations, afterwards indulged in, so obscure the facts that it is difficult to discover exactly what share of the expense of the equipment was borne by each, but of Cortes it must be said that he staked everything he possessed or could procure on the venture, even raising loans by mortgages on his property. Bernal Diaz states that the amount he expended was four thousand *dollars* in gold, besides supplying many provisions. In the sworn statement of Puertocarrero made in La Coruña, April, 1520, the witness said that Cortes had paid two thirds of the total costs. Gomara describes Velasquez as stingy and timid, wishing to fit out the armada with the least possible risk to himself, and that he proposed to halve the cost.

The appointment of Cortes to such an important com-

mand did not fail to arouse jealousies on the part of some, and the increased consequence which he gave himself in his dress, manners, and way of living served to stimulate these sentiments, so that hardly had the work of organisation got fairly under way, when these mischief makers adroitly began to work on the suspicious spirit of Velasquez. A dwarf, who played court jester in the Governor's household, was inspired to make oracular jokes in which thinly veiled warnings of what was to be expected from Cortes's over-masterful spirit, once he was free from control and in command of such an armada, were conveyed to Velasquez; these double barbed jests did not fail of their purpose, so that his distrust finally completely mastered his reason, and pushed him to the incredible folly of deciding to revoke Cortes's appointment as commander, and substitute one Vasco Porcallo a native of Caceres. This decision he made known to Lares and Duero, the very men through whom Cortes had negotiated to obtain his place, and they hastened to warn their *protégé* of the Governor's intention. To accept the humiliation, the public ridicule, to say nothing of the financial ruin into which the revocation of his appointment almost on the eve of sailing would have plunged him, was an alternative which never could have been for a moment considered by Cortes, who immediately took the one step essential to his salvation, which was to hasten his preparations, and, by unflagging efforts, to get his provisions and men on board that same day, and stand down the bay with all his ships during the night. He even seized the entire meat supply of the town for which he paid with a gold chain he wore. The accounts of the manner of the departure of the fleet also conflict. It has been represented as a veritable flight, but Bernal Diaz avers that, although he got everything ready very quickly and hastened the date of sailing, Cortes went with a number of others, and took formal leave of the Governor with embraces and mutual good wishes,

and that after he had heard mass, Diego Velasquez came down to the port to see the armada off. Las Casas however says that Velasquez only heard very early in the morning (from the butcher probably), that the preparations had been so rapidly pushed forward, and that rising from bed he made haste to the port accompanied by all the citizens in a state of great wonder and excitement. As soon as the Governor appeared, Cortes approached within a bow-shot of the shore in a boat full of his friends, all fully armed, and, in reply to the Governor's upbraidings and reproaches for such unseemly haste in his leave-taking, replied that, "some things were better done first and thought about afterwards and this was one of them"; after which bit of exculpating philosophy he returned to his ship, and the armada sailed away. Although Gomara, in whom we hear Cortes himself, agrees essentially with Las Casas in thus describing the departure, the story of the dialogue between Cortes in the midst of a boat-load of armed friends and Velasquez, helpless on the quay, surrounded by excited colonists, savours more of fiction than of fact. The simple and natural version of Bernal Diaz is more in consonance with Cortes's character, and he doubtless exercised scrupulous care to avoid provoking the testy Governor. Aware of the intrigues against him and the uncertainty of his position, his safety lay in pushing forward his preparations with unostentatious haste, masking his determination under an astute display of increased deference towards his suspicious superior. Although Cortes had evidently secured his captains, and could count on his crews, the moment for an act of open defiance was not yet, nor did Velasquez, in a letter dated November 17, 1519, to the licenciate Figueroa which was to be delivered to Charles V., allege any such, though he would hardly have failed to make the most of each item in his arraignment of his rebellious lieutenant. Stopping at Macaca, Trini-

dad, and Havana, he forcibly seized stores at these places, and also from ships which he stopped, sometimes paying for them, and sometimes giving receipts and promises. Everywhere he increased his armament, and enlisted more men.

The Governor's uneasy suspicions augmented after the sailing of the fleet, being also aggravated by the acts of the members of his household who were jealous of the sudden rise in Cortes's fortunes, and possibly also honestly distrustful of the signs of independence he had already manifested. In the work of fretting Velasquez, a half foolish astrologer was called in, who delivered oracular warnings, and imputed to Cortes schemes of revenge for past wrongs, (referring to his imprisonment by the Governor's orders), and forecasting treachery. These representations harmonised but too well with Velasquez's own fears, and easily prevailed upon him to try to recall his attainted lieutenant by sending decisive orders to his brother-in-law, Francisco Verdugo, *alcalde mayor* of Trinidad, to assume command of the fleet until Vasco Porcallo, who had been appointed successor to Cortes should arrive. For greater security, he repeated these instructions to Diego de Ordaz, Francisco de Morla, and others on whose loyalty to himself the hapless Governor thought he could count. Nobody, however, undertook to carry out the orders to displace and imprison Cortes, whose faculty for making friends was such that he had already won over all those on whom Velasquez relied, especially Ordaz and Verdugo. The very messengers who brought the official orders to degrade and imprison him went over to Cortes, and joined the expedition. Public sympathy was entirely with him, for he had rallied some of the best men in Cuba to his standard, who thus had a stake in the success of the enterprise which depended primarily on the ability of the commander. In Cortes they had full confidence, and it suited neither their temper nor their interest

to see him superseded. It was Cortes himself who replied to the Governor's letters, seeking to reassure him with protestations of loyalty and affection, counselling him meanwhile to silence the malicious tongues of the mischief makers in Santiago.

The Governor was in no way tranquillised by such a communication; on the contrary, the suppression of his orders by Verdugo enraged him beyond measure. The fleet had meanwhile gone to Havana whither a confidential messenger, one Garnica, was sent with fresh, and more stringent orders to the lieutenant-governor, Pedro Barba, who resided there, positively forbidding the fleet to sail, and ordering the immediate imprisonment of Cortes. Diego Velasquez was rarely happy in his choice of men and, in this instance his "confidential" messenger not only brought these official orders to the lieutenant-governor, but he likewise delivered to Fray Bartolomé Olmedo, the chaplain of the expedition, a certain letter from another priest who was in the executive household, warning Cortes of the sense of the Governor's orders. Failure attended all Velasquez's efforts, for Don Pedro Barba replied, telling him plainly that it was not in his power to stop Cortes, who was so popular, not only with his troops but also with the townspeople, that any attempt to interfere with him would result in a general rising in his favour. Bernal Diaz declares that they would have died for him, to a man.

During these days he played, as he himself afterwards described it to Las Casas, the "part of the gentle corsair." Parting in this manner from the royal Governor of Cuba, joint owner of the ships and their contents, it is obvious that there was no turning back for Cortes; he was henceforth driven forward by the knowledge that sure disgrace, very likely death was behind him, and drawn on by the enticing prospect of achieving such complete success as should vindicate his lawless courses. To redeem the

irregularity of these initial proceedings, it was incumbent on Cortes from thenceforth to hedge his every act with the strictest legal sanctions, and we search in vain for the slightest lapse from prescribed forms in all the succeeding acts of his career.

CHAPTER III

THE CONQUEROR

THE entire fleet sailed for the island of Cozumel on February 10, 1519, and the first vessel to land was the one commanded by Pedro de Alvarado. Alvarado began his career by an act of disobedience to orders, characteristic of his headstrong and cruel temperament, which procured him a severe reprimand from the commander, who arrived two days later and found that the Indians had all been frightened away by the Spaniards' violence in plundering their town and taking some of them prisoners. Cortes's policy in dealing with the natives was forcibly declared at the very outset, for the pilot Camacho, who had brought the vessel to land before the others, he clapped into irons, for disobeying his orders, and he rebuked Alvarado, explaining to him that his measures were fatal to the success of the expedition. The Indian prisoners were not only released, but each received gifts, and all were assured through the interpreters, Melchor and Julian, that they should suffer no further harm, and that they should therefore go and call back the others who had fled. Everything that had been stolen from the town was restored, and the fowls and other provisions which had been eaten were all paid for liberally. Discipline was enforced also among the Spaniards, and seven sailors, who were found guilty of stealing some bacon from a soldier, were sentenced to be publicly whipped.

The opinion that Cortes's followers formed a lawless

band of marauders, which rioted unchecked through Mexico, pillaging, torturing, and outraging the natives, has been lightly formed, and too generally accepted. These facts, however, point to a different state of things.

We read in the first letter the concise and simple account of the change in the character of the expedition, and of the founding of a Spanish settlement at Vera Cruz, and that this decision originated spontaneously, and all but unanimously, among the members of it. Their high motives—the conversion of barbarians to the true faith, and the subjection of vast and fabulously rich kingdoms to the Spanish crown—impelled them in these superlative interests to set aside the trivial projects of Diego Velasquez, and to impose upon Cortes the office of His Majesty's lieutenant. They required his acceptance of this duty by formal act of a notary public, and under menace of reporting his disloyalty to the emperor should he refuse to comply with the will of the community. Thus, from the simple commander of a few trading vessels commissioned by the Governor of Cuba to take soundings and exchange Spanish beads for Mexican gold, in the interest of his employer, Cortes appears, transformed into the Spanish sovereign's lawful representative, holding power conferred by a legally established Spanish municipal corporation, recognising no superior in the new world, and exercising his functions in the royal name; and the band of adventurers becomes a regularly organised colony, with its administration and its municipal officers bearing the same titles, and empowered to perform the same functions, as though the scrambling settlement of Vera Cruz were stately Seville or historic Toledo. All these creations are described as existing subject to an expression of the sovereign's will, and the royal sanction for all that had been done in the interest of the crown is humbly petitioned.

In dealing with the Indians the same strict observance

of legal form was never once relaxed. They were first invited to renounce idolatry and embrace Christianity; and they were "required"—just as solemnly as Cortes was by the Vera Cruz magistrates—to acknowledge the supremacy of the Spanish crown. A notary public performed this function of his office as gravely as a sheriff in our own day reads the riot act, and calls on a mob to disperse before resorting to force. That the "requirement" was unintelligible to the Indians did not invalidate the act of promulgation. The strength, also, of Cortes's position invariably lay in the identity of his ambitions with the interests of the crown; he was always right. By no other conceivable policy could he have accomplished what he did. The men whom Velasquez, in his helpless rage, sent to supersede or overthrow him, were mere playthings for his far-seeing statecraft and his overpowering will. The story of these events appears in all its wonderful simplicity and astounding significance, told in Cortes's own words in these letters, which have been compared with the *Commentaries* of Cæsar on his campaigns in Gaul, without suffering by the comparison.

Gaul, when overrun and conquered by Julius Cæsar, possessed no such political organisation as did the Aztec Empire when it was subdued by Cortes. There were neither cities comparable with Tlascala and Cholula, nor was there any central military organisation corresponding to the triple alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, with their vast dependencies, from which countless hordes of warriors were drawn. On the other hand while Cæsar led the flower of the Roman legions, Cortes captained a mixed band of a few hundred men, ill-trained, undisciplined, indifferent to schemes of conquest, and bent only on their own individual aggrandisement; of whom many were also disaffected towards the commanders, and required alternate cajoling and threats to hold them in hand. The very men who were sent under Narvaez

to take him alive or dead, and bring him back to the vengeance of Diego Velasquez, were won over to his standard, and fought under his leadership until Mexico fell, while their rightful commander lay a prisoner at Vera Cruz. Tapia was stripped of his goods and bundled ignominiously back to Cuba with their price in his pockets, and Cortes's delusive arguments in his ears, and, when Francisco de Garay's mission arrived by a fortuitous coincidence, simultaneously with the long delayed royal commission which recognised Cortes as Captain-General of the New Spain, his men also enthusiastically deserted in a body to Cortes, leaving Garay to humble himself before the man he had come to supplant, and to remain as his guest until death suddenly brought his career to an end.

Nothing more disastrous for Spain or for Mexico could be imagined than the success of any one of these ignorant and incompetent men. The mission of Cristobal de Tapia and its inglorious failure illustrate the deplorable conflict of authorities which rendered the Spanish colonial administration of that time almost farcical. The confusion and uncertainty prevailing in the direction of colonial affairs left many loopholes of escape for all who wished to disregard unpalatable orders. The President of the Royal Council for the Indies, who was in reality the highest authority, might order one thing, but the Jeronymite Fathers, who were supported by the *audiencia* in Hispaniola, and who exercised vague but supreme power in the Islands, would oppose or suspend the execution of his commands. There was also the Viceroy with his immense pretensions to be considered, and the Governors of Cuba and Jamaica, who were jealous of any trespass on their prerogatives, while over all there was the Sovereign, from whom *cedulas* or decrees could be obtained granting jurisdiction which contradicted the exercise of authority already established, or annulled all other

orders. As Cristobal de Tapia brought no letters from the Emperor, but only from the President of the Council, the lieutenant at Vera Cruz, while receiving him with respect, and protesting every intention to observe his commands, declared that his credentials must first be submitted to the Municipal Council. That rather vagrant body was composed chiefly of captains, who were either in Mexico with Cortes, or off executing his orders in various places, and it was not an easy thing to unite them promptly. Cortes claimed to hold his authority from that Council, which he had himself created, and which in its turn recognised no superior short of the Emperor. Treating with Tapia through Fray Pedro Melgarejo de Urea, and members of the Council, it was quickly discovered that he was accessible to golden arguments, so he was loaded with gifts, and, after selling his negro slaves, horses, arms, etc., at a good price, he consented to return to Hispaniola. Here he was sharply censured by the *audiencia* and the Jeronymites, who had originally forbidden him to land in Mexico, or interfere in any way with the conquests of Cortes.

The foundations of a liberal and independent colonial administration already existed in Mexico, on which a stable system of government might have been built up, but unfortunately these principles, which were better known to Spaniards in that century than to any other continental people, were in their decadence. Under Charles V., began the disintegration of the people's liberties, which affected likewise the government of all the dependencies, and the system of rule by Viceroys and a horde of rapacious bureaucrats was initiated, which lasted in Latin-America until the last Spanish colony disappeared with the proclamation of Cuba's independence.

Cortes was daring but never rash. His plans were carefully formed, and his decisions were the result of

cautious calculations which seemed to take cognisance of every emergency, to forestall every risk. In the execution of his designs, he was as relentless as he was daring. Both his resolution and his perseverance were implacable, and those who did not choose to bend to his will were made to break; but if his hand was iron, soft was the velvet of his glove. *Sois mon frère ou je te tue*, describes his dealings with all about him. Equanimity and resolution were the chief characteristics of his conduct. His self-possession was never disturbed by misfortune, and as he sustained success without undue elation, so did he support reverses with fortitude, recognising defeat as a momentary check, but never accepting it as final.

Besides being compared with Julius Cæsar as a general, he has been ranked with Augustus and Charles V. as a statesman, and he unquestionably possessed many of the qualities essential to greatness in common with them. He ruled his motley band with a happy mixture of genial comradeship and inflexible discipline, and hence succeeded, where an excess of either the one or the other would have brought failure. He knew whom and when to trust, giving his friendship he avoided favouritism, with the consequence that his men were united by the bond of a common trust in their commander. He shared their hardships, sympathised with their sufferings, and joined in their pleasures, but he hanged a soldier who robbed an Indian, he cut off the feet of another who plotted desertion, while, in the supreme moment when the conspiracy to kill him was discovered in Texcoco, he hanged the leader before his own door, but wisely ignored the trembling accomplices, though he had the list of their names in his pocket at the time.

From the moment Cortes learned from the Indian chief of Cempoal that the Aztec rule was heavy on the subject tribes, and that disloyalty seethed throughout the Empire only waiting the propitious moment to throw

off the supremacy of fear, his plan to unite all the discontented elements in the land under his standard, and to overthrow Montezuma by the very instrument his own cruelties and extortions had created, took shape. His first move was to persuade the Cacique of Cempoal to refuse the tribute of twenty men for sacrifice, and to imprison the collectors sent by Montezuma; by this act of open rebellion the Totonac tribes exposed themselves to the summary vengeance of the Aztecs, and were left with the sole hope of alliance with the Spaniards to save themselves from the consequences of their insubordination. This much accomplished, the next step was to win the gratitude of the tax collectors, and put Montezuma under obligations. This was done by opposing the Cempoalans' wish to sacrifice the collectors forthwith, and by later arranging for the escape by night of two of them, and sending them to Montezuma with his expressions of regret at the indignities they had suffered, and his assurance to the Emperor that he would also effect the escape of the remaining three. These he held as hostages, for when the escape of the two became known the next day, Cortes feigned great wrath at the negligence of the guards and, in order to secure the remaining prisoners, he put them in irons and sent them on board one of his own caravels. The news of these events spread quickly, and the Totanacs, convinced that the hour of successful revolt against Aztec oppression was at hand, rose as one man against Montezuma, and committed their lives and fortunes to the Spaniards. This result was a diplomatic victory of no mean value.

He next beat the Tlascalans, not into submission but into an alliance, and this pact he cemented by every art of which he was master. The astonishment, which many have lightly expressed, that a mighty state should be so easily invaded and overthrown by a handful of adventurers is considerably lessened when the political and racial

conditions in the decaying Empire are understood, and the part played by the Tlascalans in the conquest is rightly estimated. They were a warlike people who had preserved the independence of their mountain republic against the might of Montezuma, somewhat as the Montenegrins have ever defended themselves against the Ottoman power. They were from a military point of view the equals, if not the superiors, of the Aztecs in the field, fighting with the same weapons and employing like tactics; hence one hundred thousand Tlascalans, captained by Cortes, who came as the fulfiller of prophecies, almost a supernatural being with demigods in his train, commanding thunder and lightning, and mounted upon unknown and formidable beasts, were invincible. The Tlascalans had long bided the time for their vengeance, and in the alliance with Cortes they saw their opportunity. In two potential moments Tlascala held the balance of victory or defeat, and a hair would have tipped it either way. When the famished, blood-stained remnant of the Spaniards, flying from the horrors of the *Noche Triste*, fell exhausted at the gates of their capital, to annihilate them was within their choice, but these loyal, short-sighted Indians stood fast to their bond, took the wreck of the army in as brothers, nursed them, cured their wounds, and played the good Samaritan with suicidal success. Again, without the brigantines, the capture of Mexico was more than doubtful; the brigantines meant famine for the invested city, and even with them it took seventy-five days to reduce it. Tlascala provided the material, built the brigantines, paid for them, and sent eight thousand men to carry them across the mountain passes, escorted by twenty thousand more to protect the convoy, and finally built the canal from which they were launched on the lake of Texcoco. Throw the weight of Tlascala on the Aztec side, and the history of the conquest of Mexico would have to be re-written.

But even these brave people were wanting in the true spirit of unity and discipline essential to the success of large military operations, and their leaders, despite their unquestioned bravery, invited defeat by their foolish jealousies and petty quarrels over questions of personal vanity. The Indian tribes in Mexico would indeed seem to have been destitute of patriotic sentiment; tribal feeling undoubtedly existed, but was, unfortunately for them, a source rather of disunion than a bond of strength. In his description of the engagements between the armies under Xicotencatl and the forces of Cortes, Bernal Diaz ascribes the victory to three causes, saying that next to God's help, it was owing to the cavalry (as the elephants of Pyrrhus struck terror to the Romans, so did the Spaniards' horses spread panic amongst the Indians); secondly to the inexperience of the Tlascalans, which prevented their bringing up their troops without confusion, instead of which they massed them together, thus enabling the Spanish artillery to do fearful execution amongst them; and finally because the forces of Guaxocingo, commanded by the chief Chichimecatl, did not support the action of the commander-in-chief, owing to their leader's sulkiness over some observations of Xicotencatl on his conduct during the engagement of the previous day. This chieftain was plagued with a morbid touchiness which despoiled his bravery of its virtue, and Cortes later mentions with what difficulty he was induced to take the rear-guard rather than the lead, during the famous convoy of the brigantines from Tlascala over the mountain passes to the lake of Texcoco, and how he was only finally persuaded by being assured that the rear-guard was the post of greatest honour and danger; even then he made the condition that no Spaniards should share the responsibility with him. Similar rivalries prevailed likewise in the Senate, and during the discussion on the reception to be given the Spaniards, the venerable

princes actually came to blows. The story of the conquest is, on the Indian side, a humiliating recital of treachery, mutual betrayals, and tribe plotting against tribe, each foolishly thinking to use the Spaniards as an instrument of vengeance against their neighbours, whereas the fact was that the astute Cortes saw with eminent satisfaction these enervating dissensions, all of which he deftly turned to his own profit.

A perpetual coming and going of Aztec ambassadors accompanied the march from Vera Cruz. These unfortunate messengers, burdened with conflicting and impossible instructions, must have felt themselves sent upon a fool's errand, pulled hither and thither according as Montezuma's hopes or fears happened to be in the ascendant. The task of turning back the obnoxious strangers, but without offending them, lest, being gods, they might wreak vengeance on the Empire, was laid upon them. They carefully watched and quickly reported every step in advance made by the Spaniards, but their despatches were disheartening reading for their imperial master, being but chronicles of Spanish victories, and the defection of provinces. Only half convinced, yet not daring to disclose his doubts, of the semi-divine character of the invaders, Montezuma ordered every attention to be lavished upon them, while at the same time he consulted astrologers and magicians to discover some means to bane the pests, or inspired plans for their destruction, as at Cholula, where, upon the discovery of the plot, he disavowed responsibility, and left the Cholulans to suffer the consequences.

The absence or control of impulse in Cortes saved him from many a disaster which daring alone would have brought upon a leader of equal boldness but less wisdom, placed as he was. Perhaps the most supremely audacious act which history records is the seizure of Montezuma in the midst of his own court, and his conveyance to the

Spanish quarters; an undertaking so stupefying in its conception and so incredible in its execution that only the multitude and unanimity of testimony serve to remove it from the sphere of fable into that of history. This, however, was not an act of mere daring, but as he explains to the Emperor in his second letter, a measure of carefully pondered policy. We are now accustomed to see "political agents," or financial and military "advisers," near the persons of nominal rulers, to whom the controlling foreign power concedes sufficient semblance of independence to mask their essential servitude, but the system of ruling a nation through the person of its enslaved sovereign originated with the seizure of Montezuma by Cortes. He was a man of unfeigned piety, of the stuff of which martyrs are made, nor did his conviction that he was leading a holy crusade to win lost souls to salvation ever waver. He says in his *Ordenanzas* at Tlascala, that, were the war carried on for any other motive than to overthrow idolatry and to secure the salvation of so many souls by converting the Indians to the holy faith, it would be unjust and obnoxious, nor would the Emperor be justified in rewarding those who took part in it.

Among other ordinances governing the moral and religious welfare of the people in Mexico after the conquest, was one which prescribed attendance at the instructions in Christian doctrine, given on Sundays and feast days under pain of stripes. The Jesuit historian Cavo (*Los Tres Siglos de Mexico*, tom. i., p. 151) says that on one occasion when Cortes had himself been absent, he was reprimanded from the pulpit on the following Sunday, and, to the stupefaction of the Indians, submitted to the prescribed flogging in public. Cortes resembled the publican who struck his breast and invoked mercy for his sins, rather than the Pharisee who found his chief cause for thankfulness in the contemplation

his own superior virtues. Prescott was uncertain whether this submission to a public whipping should be attributed to "bigotry" or to "policy." It seems to have been first of all an act of simple consistency by which the commander sanctioned the law he had himself established. Precept is ever plentiful but example is the better teacher, and a more striking and unforgetable example of the equality of all under the law, it would indeed be difficult to find in history. The policy of demonstrating that no one's faults were exempt from the punishment provided by the law was unquestionably present, and deserving only of applause, but for bigotry there seems to be no place whatever, unless indeed the provision of compulsory instruction for both the natives and the Spaniards in Christian doctrine be so described.

His religious zeal was sometimes intemperate, nor was it always guided by prudence, but he usually showed wisdom in submitting to the restraining influence of some handy friar whose saner and more persuasive methods promised surer results than his own strenuous system of conversion would have secured. Nowhere is the vindication of the religious orders in dealing with native races more convincingly established than in the history of their early relations with the Mexicans. The restraints the commander placed on the license of his soldiers might well have been prompted by his policy of winning the friendly confidence of the Indians, but his measures for repressing profanity of every sort, gambling and other camp vices, and his insistence upon daily mass and prayer before and thanksgivings after battle, are traceable to no such motive, and it is more than once recorded that the Indians were profoundly impressed by the decorous solemnity of the religious ceremonies and the devotion shown by the Spaniards.

Shortcomings in the practice of the moral precepts of religion, either in that century or in this, are not con-

fined to men who find themselves cut adrift from the usual restraints of civilised society, isolated and paramount amidst barbarians, whose inferior moral standard provides constant and easy temptations to lapse, and, while it were as difficult as it is unnecessary to attempt a defence of the excesses which the Spaniards undoubtedly committed in Mexico, it is equally impossible to condemn them as exceptional. Commenting upon the strange contradiction between professed piety, and practised vice and cruelty, Prescott writes: "When we see the hand, red with the blood of the wretched native, raised to invoke the blessing of heaven, we experience something like a sensation of disgust, and a doubt of its sincerity." The distinguished historian here voices a facile assumption all too common amongst many who, lacking his luminous comprehension of the spirit of that age, commit the injustice of measuring the acts of its men by the more humane standards of our own times. He himself acquits Cortes of the imputation of insincerity, and declares that no one who reads his correspondence, or studies the events of his career, can doubt that he would have been the first to lay down his life for the Faith. Too many barriers, however, interposed between the Anglo-Saxon protestant historian of the nineteenth century and the Spanish Catholicism of the sixteenth to allow even one of his superior historical acumen to accurately appreciate the operation of religious influences on the character of such a man as Fernando Cortes, whose military conquest was prompted in a large measure by genuinely religious motives, but whose fervent practice of the Church's teachings unfortunately alternated with lapses into grievous sensuality.

Whatever else may be doubted, the religious sincerity and martial courage of Fernando Cortes are above impeachment. He was a stranger to hypocrisy which is a smug vice of cowards and if his reasons for acts of policy, which cost many lives, may be deplored by the humane,

their honesty may be reasonably impugned by none. Had the influence of his faith on his morals been proportionate to its strength, he would have merited canonisation.

Sixteenth century Spain produced a race of Christian warriors whose piety, born of an intense realisation of, and love for a militant Christ, was of a martial complexion. beholding in the symbol of salvation—the Cross—the standard of Christendom, around which the faithful must rally, and for whose protection and exaltation swords must be drawn and blood spilled if need be. They were the children of the generation which had expelled the last Moor from Spain, and had brought centuries of religious and patriotic warfare to a triumphant close, in which their country was finally united under the crown of Castile. From such forebears the generation of Cortes received their heritage of Christian chivalry. The discovery of a new world, peopled by barbarians, opened a new field to Spanish missionary zeal, in which the kingdom of God upon earth was to be extended, and countless souls rescued from the obscene idolatries and debasing cannibalism which enslaved them. This was the "white man's burden" which that century laid on the Spaniard's shoulders. To the scoffing philosopher of the eighteenth century, these crusading buccaneers in whose characters the mystic and the sensualist fought for the mastery seemed but knaves clumsily masquerading as fools. The fierce piety, which furnished entertainment to the age of Voltaire, somewhat puzzles our own. Expeditions now set forth into dark continents unburdened with professions of concern for the spiritual or moral welfare of the natives. Indeed, nothing is deemed more foolish than attempts to interfere with the religious beliefs and practices of barbarians, and the commander in our times, who would overturn an idol merely to set up a wooden cross, thereby exposing his followers to the risk of being massacred, would be court-martialled and degraded, if

indeed he ever ventured to return to civilisation. If such work is to be done at all, there are richly endowed missionary societies to attend to it. But even the equipment of the missionaries who undertake to carry evangelical doctrine amongst savage peoples presents some striking contrasts to the barefooted Spanish friars who first preached Christianity to the Mexicans. If the heathen are no longer brought by compulsion into the light, we make them pay a heavy indemnity for their privilege of sitting in darkness, and, whenever their opposition to the dissemination of Christian teaching amongst them emerges from quiesence into activity, a warship is ready to bombard their coasts while troops are at hand to annex a province.

In the eighth of Lord Lyttleton's *Dialogues of the Dead* the shades of Fernando Cortes and William Penn are made to discourse with one another upon the merits of their respective undertakings in North America, each ghost defending its own system. Friend Penn in one passage says to Cortes:

> I know very well that thou wast as fierce as a lion and as subtle as a serpent. The Devil, perhaps, may place thee as high *in his black list of heroes* as Alexander or Cæsar. It is not my business to interfere with him in settling thy rank. But hark thee, Friend Cortes,—What right hadst thou or had the King of Spain himself to the Mexican Empire? Answer me that, if thou canst.
>
> Cortes. The Pope gave it to my Master.
>
> Penn. The Devil offered to give our Lord all the kingdoms of the earth, and I suppose the Pope as *His Vicar* gave thy Master this; in return for which he fell down and worshipped him like an idolater as he was, etc.

The ghost of Penn defends his possession of Pennsylvania, alleging the honest right of fair purchase; to which Cortes replies:

I am afraid there was a little *fraud* in the purchase—thy followers, William Penn, are said to think cheating in a quiet, sober way no mortal sin.

The verbal skirmish continues in this vein, and concludes thus:

PENN. Ask thy heart whether ambition was not thy real motive, and zeal the pretence?

CORTES. Ask thine whether thy zeal had no worldly views, and whether thou didst believe all the nonsense of the sect at the head of which thou wast pleased to become a legislator. Adieu, self-examination requires retirement.

The author does not allow for any clearing of the human perceptions in the spirit world, and it is probable that had Fernando Cortes and William Penn been contemporaries and able to discuss their respective systems of dealing with Indians, and founding settlements, they would have found more points of agreement than their loquacious ghosts were able to discover. The flaccid defence advanced by Cortes's shade betrays some deterioration of mental power, for in his lifetime the conqueror was hardly less formidable in polemics than he was on the battle-field, but, in the feeble discourse put in the mouth of this pale spirit, we find nothing of the fierceness of the lion or the subtlety of the serpent which Friend Penn attributed to Cortes in the flesh.

Penn's ghost professes to find Cortes's religious motives suspect, yet there are not more proofs of his presence in Mexico than there are of his absolute belief in himself as a divinely chosen instrument for the conversion of souls. Purging the human soul from the taint of idolatry or heresy by means of physical torments is a familiar blot on the pages of the history of religions.

More than a century after the conquest of Mexico the New England Puritans were torturing and killing by process of law,—not savage enemies who threatened

their security, but one another, and all within their power, who dissented from their own gloomy and peculiar theological delusions. They may have believed in the mercy of God, but they grimly preferred to see themselves as ministers of His wrath.

Nothing, more than the exercise of great power by a conscientious man, imbued with faith in himself as a chosen instrument for executing divine justice on his fellow men, is surer to produce a very Frankenstein of fanaticism, and all peoples and creeds have furnished the spectacle of men of professing godliness, who slew to save, and whose claim to a great mission was written in the blood of those who were described as God's enemies. There is even Scripture warranty for it. If invasion of an unoffending nation for the purpose of conquest be justifiable, either by moral or utilitarian arguments, then the sufferings which inevitable resistance must bring are covered by the same justifications.

The accusation of wanton cruelty, too lightly brought against Cortes has been diligently propagated by the interested, and complacently accepted by the indiscriminating, until dissent from it awakens incredulous surprise. Nevertheless, all that can be learned of his character proves that Cortes was not by nature cruel, nor did he take wanton pleasure in the sufferings of others. Conciliation and coercion were both amongst his weapons, his natural preference being for the former, as is seen by his never once failing in his dealings with the Indians to exhaust peaceful methods before resorting to force. The secret of carrying on a war of conquest mercifully has not yet been discovered, and recent reports from Africa and the Philippines do not show much advance on the policy of the Spaniards in Mexico four hundred years ago, though it cannot be pretended that our modern expeditions are attended by the perils, known,—and most of all the unknown,—which awaited the

ignorant adventurers in the New World at every turn.

There were three ends which according to Cortes's ethics justified any measures for their accomplishment, 1st, the spread of the faith, 2nd, the subjugation of the Indians to Spanish rule, and 3rd, the possession of their treasures; and as his narrative of the conquest unfolds itself, it will be seen that his resolution stopped at nothing for the achievement of these ends. But there is no instance of tortures and suffering being treated by him as a sport. Whether he might not have accomplished all he did with less bloodshed, is a purely speculative question. Fr. Acosta (*Storia de las Indias*, lib. vii., cap. xxv.) states that so entirely were the Mexicans imbued with the belief that the Spaniards came in fulfilment of the prophecy of their most beneficent deity, Quetzalcoatl, that Montezuma would have abdicated, and the whole empire have passed into their hands without a struggle, had Cortes but comprehended the force of the prevailing superstition, and met the popular expectation by rising consistently to his *rôle* of demigod. There are facts which tend to lend weight to this argument, and had Cortes but realised the possibilities, he might have been equal to the part, though his followers fell so lamentably short, that it is doubtful if the illusion could have been long sustained. As it was, the awful tragedy of the *Sorrowful Night*, and the downfall, amidst bloodshed and suffering unspeakable of Mexico, was precipitated by the brutal folly of Alvarado,—not of Cortes.

In his relations with women, Cortes shows his primitive polygamous temperament. Even at the age of sixteen in his native Medellin, we find him falling from a wall and all but losing his life in an amorous adventure with an anonymous fair one, and throughout his life these intrigues succeeded one another unbrokenly; but his loves were so entirely things "of his life apart," that

their influence upon his motives or his actions is never discernible. In Cuba his *rôle* of Don Juan brought him into a conflict with the Governor, which was the origin of their life-long duel for supremacy in the colonies. But Catalina Xuarez, about whom the trouble first began, is quickly lost sight of; she passes like a pale shade across that epoch of her husband's life, and is never heard of again, until her uninvited presence in Mexico, followed quickly by her unlamented death, is briefly mentioned. The most important woman in his life was his Indian interpreter, Marina, and some writers have sought to weave a romance into the story of their relations, for which there seems, upon examination, to be little enough substantial material. During the period when she was indispensable to the business in hand, she was never separated from Cortes, but we know that he was not faithful to her even then, while, as soon as she ceased to be necessary, she was got rid of as easily as she had been acquired.

Montezuma gave him his daughter, who first received Christian baptism to render her worthy of the commander's companionship, and was known as Doña Ana. She lived openly with Cortes in his quarters, and had with her, her two sisters, Inez and Elvira, and a sister of the King of Texcoco who was called Doña Francisca. Doña Ana was killed during the retreat on the *Sorrowful Night*, and was pregnant at the time. A third daughter of the Emperor, Doña Isabel, married Alonso de Grado, who shortly afterwards died, when she also passed into the household of the conqueror, to whom she bore a daughter. (Bernal Diaz, cap. cvii.; Bernaldino Vasquez de Tapia, tom. ii., pp. 244, 305–306; Gonzalo Mejia, tom. ii., pp. 240–241). According to Juan Tirado two of Montezuma's daughters bore sons to Cortes, and one bore a daughter. (Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, lib. ii., cap. vi., note.)

In his last will, Cortes mentions another natural

daughter, whose mother was Leonor Pizarro, who afterwards married Juan de Salcedo.

It is thus positively known that besides Marina, there were four other ladies who shared in his affections during this period of the conquest, and meanwhile his first wife Catalina Xuarez la Marcaida was alive in Cuba. These undisguised philanderings must have somewhat blighted Marina's romance.

His marriage with Doña Juana de Zuñiga took place when he was at the zenith of his fame. The advantages such an alliance with a noble and powerful family of Castile seemed to promise, though many, were perhaps not as tangible as the ambitious conqueror had hoped. The marriage was negotiated before he and the lady had met, but it does not appear to have been less happy for this conformity to a custom which at that time was universal in noble families. Doña Juana could have seen but little of her restless husband, who was perpetually engaged elsewhere, but she was a good wife, and loved him, just as did Catalina Xuarez and all his mistresses while his uxorious instincts made it easy for him to be equally happy with all of them. He was affectionate and tender, devoted to all of his children, distinguishing but little between his legitimate and his natural offspring in a truly patiarchal fashion. For the latter he secured Bulls of legitimacy from the Pope, and provided generously in his will. Not less strong was his filial piety, and among the first treasure sent to Spain, there went gifts to his father and mother in Medellin, and, after his father's death, he brought his mother to Mexico, where she died, and was buried in the vault at Texcoco, where his own body was afterwards laid.

The Fifth Letter reports the events of his long journey of exploration through Yucatan. In setting forth on this expedition which was to cover a distance of five hundred leagues through savage wilds, Cortes affected

the pomp of an Oriental satrap, taking with him besides the necessary soldiers, guides, Indian allies, and camp followers, a complete household of stewards, valets, pages, grooms, and other attendants, all under the command of a major-domo of the household. Gold and silver plate for his table was provided, also musicians, jugglers, and acrobats to amuse the company. Spanish muleteers and equerries were taken to have charge of the carriages and horses, and, in addition to the usual provender, to ensure a supply of meat, an immense drove of pigs was driven along, which could not have accelerated the march. He had a map painted on cloth by native artists, which showed after their fashion the rivers and mountain chains to be crossed. This and his compass were all Cortes could rely upon to guide him during his perilous undertaking. Doña Marina went as chief interpreter, but Geronimo de Aguilar did not accompany this expedition, though he was not dead, as Bernal Diaz states, for in 1525 he applied for a piece of land on which to build a house in the street now called Balvanera (Alaman, *Dissertazioni* IV.). The record of these events, however noteworthy, may seem tame reading after the exciting chronicle of the siege and fall of Mexico—a war drama of the most intense kind, but, in forming a correct estimate of Cortes's character we must not restrict ourselves to a study of the qualities displayed in the course of the conquest, and which prove him a most resourceful military genius. At five and thirty years of age he had successfully completed as daring and momentous an undertaking as history records, and it is as conqueror of Mexico that he takes his place among the world's great heroes. M. Desiré Charnay, in the preface to his French translation of the Five Letters, says: "*La conquête de Cortes . . . . . coûta au Mexique plus de dix millions d'êtres humains emportés par la guerre, les maladies et les mauvais traitments: de sorte que cet' homme de génie*

peut entrer sans conteste dans la redoutable phalange des fléaux de l'humanité."

His subsequent undertakings called for the exercise of qualities hardly less remarkable, though of a different order, and it was absence of productive success which has caused them to be overlooked in a world where results count for more than effort.

It was never the policy of the Spanish crown to entrust the government of dependencies to their discoverers or conquerors, and when powerful friends at Court sought in 1529 to prevail upon Charles the Fifth to grant Cortes supreme power under the crown in Mexico, His Majesty was not to be persuaded; and in refusing he pointed out that his royal precedessors had never done this, even in the case of Columbus, or of Gonsalvo de Cordoba, the conqueror of Naples. Had it been possible, however, or the Emperor to free himself from the suspicions which the persistent intrigues of Cortes's enemies fomented, especially from the jealous fear of a possible aspiration to independent sovereignty, it cannot be doubted that the wisest thing, both for Mexico and for the royal interests, would have been the installation of Cortes in as independent a vice-royalty as was compatible with the maintenance of the royal supremacy. While Cortes, in common with all his kind, loved gold, he was not a mere vulgar plunderer, seeking to hastily enrich himself, at no matter what cost to the country, in order to retire to a life of luxury in Spain. Moreover even granting that he had started with no larger purpose, it is plain that he was himself at the outset unconscious, both of his own powers and of the strange drama about to unfold, in which destiny reserved him the first part. By the time the conquest was completed, his knowledge of the possibilities of Mexico had expanded, so that his views on all questions connected with the occupation, the government and the future welfare of the country, hap

developed from the schemes of a mere adventurer into the policy of a statesman. The constantly revived accusation of aspiring to independent sovereignty was a myth, for the Emperor had no more faithful subject than Cortes, in whom the dual mainsprings of action were religion and loyalty.

His better judgment condemned the system of *encomiendas*, and only admitted slavery as a form of punishment for the crime of rebellion, even then to be mitigated by every possible safeguard. Far from driving the natives from their homes, or wishing to deport them to the islands, he used every inducement to encourage them to remain in their towns, to rebuild their cities, and resume their industries, realising full well that the true strength of government, as well as the surest source of revenue, lay in a pacific and busy population. To this end he adopted the system of restoring or maintaining the native chiefs in their jurisdiction and dignity, imposing upon them the obligation of ruling their tribes,—and persuading those who had been frightened away to the mountains to return to their villages. The exceptions to this policy were in the cases of certain rebellious princes, whom he considered powerful enough to be dangerous.

That Cortes understood the Indians and had a kindly feeling for them, is proven many times over, while the proofs of their affection for him are even more numerous. *Malintzin* was a name to conjure with amongst them, and while familiar relations with most of the other Spaniards speedily bred contempt, their attachment to Cortes increased as time went on. The iron policy which used massacres, torture, and slavery for its instruments of conquest, did not revolt the Indians, since it presented no contrast to the usage common among themselves in time of war; *væ victis* comprised the ethics of native kings, who in addition to wars for aggrandisement of territory and increase of glory also waged them solely

to obtain victims for the sacrificial altars of their gods. This ghastly levy ceased with the introduction of Malintzin's religion, and he brought no hitherto unfamiliar horror as a substitute for it.

Some writers have even essayed to parallel the cruelties incident to the procedure of the Inquisition, and the executions after sentence by that tribunal, with the human sacrifices of the Aztecs. Without here embarking upon an investigation of the methods of the Inquisition, it may, in strict justice, be pointed out that, as far as Mexico was concerned, the researches of the learned archæologist, Garcia Icazbalceta, have shown that during the two hundred and seventy years of its existence in that country, the number of persons delivered to the secular arm for execution was forty-seven (*Bibliografia Mexicana del Siglo*, XVI., page 382). Moreover the Indians were exempt from molestation for they were expressly defined as being outside the jurisdiction of the Holy Office.

Except the independent Tlascalans, all the other peoples of Anahuac were held in stern subjection by the Aztec emperor; heavy taxes were collected from them, human life was without value, torture was in common use; their sons were seized for sacrifice, their daughters replenished the harems of the confederated kings and great nobles, so that Cortes was welcomed as the liberator of subject peoples, the redresser of wrongs. He had procured them the sweets of a long nourished, but despaired of, vengeance, and, though it was but the exchange of one master for another, they tasted the satisfaction of having squared some old scores with their oppressors. The conquest completed, Cortes bent all his efforts to creating systems of government under which the different peoples might live and prosper in common security, and, with the disappearance of the need for them, the harsher methods also vanished. Few of his cherished intentions were realised, however, and the power which would have

enabled him to bring his wiser plans to fruition was denied him.

The fruits of conquest are bitterness of spirit and disappointment, though Cortes fared better than his great contemporaries Columbus, Balboa, and Pizarro, who after discovering continents and oceans and subduing empires were requited with chains, the scaffold, and the traitor's dagger. True, he saw himself defrauded of his deserts, while royal promises were found to be elastic; and in his last years he was even treated as an importunate suppliant, being excluded from the presence of the sovereign to whose crown he had given an empire.

Lesser men would have been content with the world-wide fame, the great title, and vast estates to which from modest beginnings Cortes had risen in a few brief years, but a lesser man would never have accomplished such vast undertakings, and it was his curse that his ambitions kept pace with his achievements. From the fall of Mexico until his death, his life was a series of disappointments, unfulfilled ambitions, and petty miseries, due to the malice of rivals, and the faithlessness of friends, relieved only by some brief periods of splendid triumph, illumined by royal favour. Even financial embarrassments were not spared him. A curse was on the Aztec gold, and it was not enough that little treasure was found in the city, but Cortes must be accused, in the unreasoning fury of the general disappointment, of being in collusion with Quauhtemotzin to conceal the hoard and share it together later on. He yielded to this murmuring and consented to the torture of the captive Emperor, for whose safety he had pledged his word, thus staining his name with an indelible blot of shame. His journeys to Yucatan and Honduras, so fully related in the Fifth Letter, would have won renown for another but they added nothing to his reputation. The several expeditions to the South Sea, and his discovery

of California, all cost him immense sums, plunged him into debt, and merely served to pave the way for later undertakings, so that he might with reason have exclaimed with Columbus, "I have opened the door for others to enter." During this time he was surrounded by enemies hidden and declared, who sent complaints of him to Spain by every ship; he was accused of murdering his wife Catalina Xuarez who had died within a few months after her arrival in Mexico where, though possibly unwelcome, she was received with due honours; he was accused of defrauding the royal treasury, as well as his companions in arms, and of taking an undue share of the spoils for himself; and finally he was accused of planning to throw off his allegiance to Spain, and set up an independent government with himself as king. These ceaseless intrigues against him finally decided the Emperor to send a high commissioner (*juez de residencia*) to investigate, not only all charges against the Captain-General, but also to report upon the general condition of affairs in New Spain. This was the means usually employed in such cases and did not necessarily constitute any indignity to Cortes, to whom the Emperor took occasion to write, notifying him of his decision, and assuring him that it was in no sense prompted by suspicions of his loyalty or honesty, but rather to furnish him with the opportunity of silencing his calumniators once for all by proving his innocence. Don Luis Ponce de Leon, a young man of high character and unusual attainments, was charged with this delicate mission, and his appointment was universally applauded as an admirable one.

He was received upon his arrival in Mexico by Cortes and all the authorities with every distinction due to him, but his untimely death of a fever within a few weeks after his arrival defeated the good results expected from his labours, and also furnished Cortes's enemies with another accusation—that of poisoning the royal commissioner.

His powers devolved upon Marcos de Aguilar, who was not only too old for such an arduous post, but was ill of a disease which, it was said, obliged him to take nourishment by suckling, for which purpose wet nurses and she-goats were daily furnished him. The speedy death of this harmless old man started another story of poisoning, and was followed by the supreme disaster of Estrada's succession to the ill-starred commissionership, under whom the baiting of Cortes went on apace, while the entire population, Spanish as well as native, groaned under oppressions and vexations innumerable. The slave-trade was carried on shamelessly with nameless cruelties, chiefly by the brutal Nuñez de Guzman, a partisan of Diego Velasquez, who had been placed by the latter's influence as Governor of Panuco, for the express purpose of tormenting Cortes, and fomenting cabals against his authority. This petty tyrant committed barbarities never before heard of in Mexico.

Wearied out with persecutions and insults, and hopeless of obtaining justice from such officials as Estrada and his subordinates, Cortes decided to go to Spain and lay his own case before the Emperor. His decision created some consternation amongst his opponents, and Estrada realised that it was a grave blunder to drive the Captain-General to make a personal appeal to the Emperor. If opposition or concessions could have stopped him, Cortes would have relinquished his plan, for overtures were made through the bishop of Tlascala, and promises of satisfaction were not spared; but his preparations were well under way, and, though perhaps somewhat mollified by the changed tone of Estrada, he remained firm in his purpose. Sailing with two ships from Vera Cruz (where he learned the news of his father's death), he landed after an unusually brief and prosperous voyage at the historic port of Palos in May, 1528.

CHAPTER IV

MARQUES DEL VALLE

CORTES had arranged that his arrival at the Spanish Court should be of the nature of a veritable pageant. Different estimates of the treasure he took with him are given by different authorities, but these are mere matters of figures; the amount was fabulous, and, in addition to this, he carried a perfect museum of Mexican objects, such as the unique feather-work in which the Indians excelled, arms, embroideries, implements of obsidian, rare plants; indigenous products such as chocolate, tobacco, vanilla, and liquid amber; gorgeous parrots, herons, jaguars, and other beautiful birds and animals unknown in Spain were carried or led by Indians, in the dress of their tribes. That nothing might be wanting, he took with him many skilful jugglers, acrobats, dwarfs, albinos, and human monstrosities, which were much the fashion at that time, and these curiosities made such a sensation upon his arrival, that Charles the Fifth could think of no fitter destination for them than to send them on to His Holiness Clement the Seventh, before whom they performed and showed themselves to the delight and wonder of the pontifical Court. In the personal suite of the Conqueror, besides the numerous officials of his household, there went about forty Indian princes in their most gorgeous robes and jewels, amongst whom were the sons of Montezuma and of the Tlascalan chief, Maxixcatzin.

The arrival of this magnificent cortège at Palos was

unannounced, and hence no fitting reception had been prepared there, but accident supplied a more remarkable grouping of interesting men of the century than design could have provided. Within the modest walls of Santa Maria la Rabida, where Columbus had found hospitality, there met with Cortes, who was accompanied by Gonzalo de Sandoval and Andres de Tapia, Francisco Pizarro, whose brilliant career in South America, rivalling that of Cortes in the North, was just dawning; and by a fateful coincidence, there was also in the suite of Cortes, the Spanish soldier Juan de Rada, by whose hand Pizarro was destined to perish in Peru. The date of his arrival at Palos is given by Bernal Diaz as December 1527, but Herrera's authority for the later date has been followed by Prescott, Alaman, and other historians.

The triumphal home-coming was marred at the very outset by the death of Gonzalo de Sandoval at Palos, a few days after their landing. For none of his captains did Cortes cherish the affection he felt for this gallant young soldier, who was his fellow-townsman and loyal friend. Sandoval was buried at La Rabida, and Cortes first went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Guadeloupe, where he spent some days in mourning his loss, and having masses celebrated for the departed soul. This pious duty accomplished he set out for Toledo, where the Court then was, and as the news of his arrival had spread, and had also been announced by his own letter to the Emperor, he was everywhere accorded a veritable triumph by the people, who flocked from all sides to see the hero of the great conquest, and to gaze upon the marvellous trophies which he brought; so that since the first return of Columbus no such demonstrations had been seen in Spain.

A brilliant group of nobles comprising the Duke of Bejar, the Counts of Aguilar and Medellin, the Grand Prior of St. John, and many of the first citizens of Toledo, rode out from the city to meet the conqueror on the

plain, and the next day the Emperor received him with every mark of favour, raising him up when he would have knelt in the royal presence, and seating him by his side. The moment was an auspicious one, for influences had been at work in his favour. Since the appointment of the new commission of *residencia*, presided over by the infamous Nuñez de Guzman, which had already left Spain, the Emperor's information as to the real state of things in Mexico and the respective merits of the contending parties, had been much extended and perfected. He consulted Cortes during his stay at Court upon everything pertaining to the new realm; its resources, the natives, their customs, the Spanish colonists, and especially concerning the best means for establishing a stable government, and developing industries and agriculture.

Besides full power to continue his explorations, and the confirmation of his rank of Captain-General, the title of Marques del Valle de Oaxaca was conferred upon Cortes and his descendants, by patents dated July 6, 1529, to which was joined a vast grant of lands, comprising twenty-eight towns and villages; one twelfth of all his future discoveries was to be his own. He received the knighthood and habit of Santiago, and when he was confined to his lodgings by illness, the Emperor visited him in person, this latter being such a singular honour, that, as Prescott caustically observes, the Spanish writers of the time seemed to regard it as ample recompense for all he had done and suffered. It does not seem certain that he accepted the knighthood of Santiago, though Herrera says that he had already possessed it since 1525. His reason for his alleged refusal was that no *commenda* was attached to the dignity, and Alaman (*Dissertazione* V.) says that while his name is on the rolls of the order, the insignia do not appear either in his arms or his portraits, nor is any mention found of his possession of this grade in the list of his honours.

It is good to note that Cortes did not forget his friends while he was at court, but profited by the Emperor's hour of graciousness to obtain countless favours for them, especially for the Indians. The Tlascalans, in recognition of their loyalty, were exempted for ever from taxes and tribute; the Cempoalans were granted a like exemption for a period of two years; a college for the sons of Mexican nobles, and another for girls, were endowed. Money was awarded to the Franciscan order for building churches and schools; tithes were established to maintain the Bishop Zumarraga; various privileges were secured for the original "conquerors" who had settled in the country. Also generous doweries were appointed to the four daughters of Montezuma, who were being educated in a convent in Texcoco, as well as to the daughters of Mexican nobles who married Spaniards.

During his stay in Spain, Cortes married his second wife Doña Juana de Zuñiga, a daughter of the Count of Aguilar, and niece of the Duke of Bejar. His gifts to his bride were of such magnificence as to arouse even the Queen's envy, especially the five large stones described as emeralds, which excelled any jewels ever seen, and were worth a nation's ransom. There were no emeralds in Mexico, and these stones were probably a kind of jade or serpentine of great brilliancy and value, which were easily confounded with emeralds. One of these stones was cut as a bell, whose tongue was formed of a large pear-shaped pearl, and which bore the inscription *benedito sea el que te crió;* another was shaped like a fish with golden eyes; the third was in the form of a rose; the fourth in that of a trumpet; and the fifth was fashioned into a cup, surmounted by a superb pearl, and standing on a base of gold, on which was the inscription, *inter natos mulierum non surexit major.* For this last jewel alone, some Genoese merchants who saw it at Palos offered forty thousand ducats. The fame of these jewels was

such that the Queen expressed a wish to have them, and, had not Cortes forestalled the royal desire by presenting them to Doña Juana de Zuñiga as a marriage gift they would doubtless have passed into the crown jewels of Spain.

In the meantime, while Cortes was being lionised and honoured in Spain, his enemies in Mexico were not idle, for Nuñez de Guzman from the moment of arriving there had begun secretly to collect information against him, and by unscrupulous and inquisitorial methods easily succeeded in forming a voluminous budget of accusations, among which figured the alleged poisoning of Luis Ponce de Leon, the conspiracy to establish himself as independent sovereign in Mexico, defrauding the royal fisc, and incitement of the Indians to rebel against the royal authority while he was absent in Spain. Encouraging the enemies of Cortes to depose against him on the one hand, Guzman found excuses for persecuting his friends on the other, even to the extent of imprisoning, torturing, and hanging them on one pretext or another. Things reached such a pass through the violence of the president's conduct, that the Bishop Fray Juan Zumarraga, a man whose exemplary life gave him great influence, and the Franciscan monks, sent a vigorous protest to Spain against Guzman and his auditors, praying that he be deposed. This petition provoked an order from the Empress-Regent and the Royal Council, to take their *residencia*, and that they be imprisoned if found guilty of the abuses imputed to them. The bishop himself was appointed, *ad interim*, president of the new *audiencia*, which was composed of Quiroga, Salmeron, and Ceynos pending the arrival of the permanent president, Don Sebastian Ramirez de Fuenleal, then Bishop of San Domingo, and afterwards of Cuenca.

Nuñez de Guzman sought to evade the issue by organising, against the Chichimecas, an expedition which he

conducted with characteristic brutality. He left the city at the head of five hundred Spaniards, and over two thousand Indians, between auxiliaries and camp servants, before Cortes returned from Spain.

The powers conceded to Cortes as Captain-General, and for the continuation of his explorations and discoveries, were so large, and so ill-defined, that they could hardly fail to conflict with those of the royal *audiencia*, and this came to pass immediately after his arrival at Vera Cruz on July 15, 1530. The Marques, as he was henceforward called, was accompanied by his wife and his mother, and was received upon landing with jubilation by Spaniards and Indians alike, who flocked in thousands from all parts to welcome him, and to present their grievances for his adjustment. The new *audiencia* was not yet constituted, and the auditors, Matienzo and Delgadillo, sent strict orders to Vera Cruz that the people assembled there in Cortes's honour disperse to their homes, while to Cortes himself, who had meanwhile marched amid ovations by the way of Tlascala to Texcoco, they delivered a prohibition to enter the capital. This order was in conformity with the instructions given him before leaving Spain, so he was obliged to respect it, and to establish himself at Texcoco until the arrival of the new *audiencia* which took place in December of the same year, 1530. At the outset everything went well, and the new auditors rendered justice in several of Cortes's claims, and took counsel with him concerning affairs and the measures to be adopted. This promising state of things, however, was of brief duration, and, in their letter of February 22, 1531, to the Emperor, they made complaints of his pretensions, and mentioned among other things that the bishop in reading the prayers for the King and royal family added after the words *cum prole regia* "*et duce exercitus nostri*," and that they had corrected him for so doing.

Another of their letters, in August, 1532, complains of his great influence over the natives, and of his using his powers as Captain-General to revenge himself on his enemies, adding, "He says he will resign the Captaincy General and return to Spain. Oh if he would only do it!" (Muñoz, tom. lxxix., fol. 118). The auditors at other times advised that he be called to Spain on some pretext,—the more so as he wanted to go.

The conquest finished, Cortes's occupation was gone. His proud spirit and active temperament could ill brook the checks of the *audiencia*, and the limitations set to his enterprises by men who neither understood nor sympathised with them. At one time he retired in disgust from the capital, intending to devote himself to the administration of the affairs of his vast marquisate of Oaxaca. The capture of the picturesque town of Cuernavaca is described in the third letter, and for beauty of position it has few rivals even in Mexico. Here Cortes had built himself a handsome palace and a large church, both of which are still standing, though in a lamentable state of advancing delapidation. As a planter in Cuba, he had already shown initiative and capacity, and he profited by his former experience to introduce successfully the sugar cane, the silk-worm culture, new breeds of the merino sheep and various other kinds of cattle. Mills for the handling of raw products were established in various places, and these new industries with which Cortes endowed Mexico have continued to be among her chief sources of wealth. But this was insufficient to occupy his restless activities, which, by the news of events in Peru, and of the rich countries discovered in the South Sea and along the Gulf of California, were constantly excited to plan fresh enterprises. In May, 1532, he fitted out two vessels which sailed from Acapulco, under command of his cousin Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, one of which with the commander on board was never heard of

again, while the other reached Jalisco after many perils. The misfortunes of this expedition began with a mutiny.

Two years later (1534) he built two more vessels at Tehuantepec, which he entrusted to Hernando Grijalba, and Diego de Bezerra de Mendoza (a relative) respectively, with Ortun Jimenez as pilot. The ships got separated the first night out and never saw one another again. The one commanded by Grijalba discovered a deserted island called Santo Tomé, somewhere off the point of Lower California, and returned thence to Tehuantepec; the fate of the other was tragical, for Bezerra was murdered in his sleep by the pilot Jimenez, who took command, and, after coasting along Jalisco, landed at the Bay of Santa Cruz, where he, with twenty Spaniards, was killed by the natives. The remaining sailors got back to the port of Chiametla, where Nuñez de Guzman, who was then in Jalisco, took possession of the vessel.

These two fruitless ventures decided Cortes to take command himself, and in 1536 he sent three ships from Tehuantepec to the port of Chiametla where he joined them, marching overland from Mexico. He regained possession of the ship which Guzman had seized from the sailors of Jimenez, refitted it, and set out on his voyage, exploring the coast for some fifty leagues beyond Santa Cruz (or La Paz), during which trip he suffered innumerable hardships, and lost many of his men from sickness. The news of his own death reached Mexico, and his wife sent two ships and a caravel to look for him and bring him back. His wife's letters, together with others from the royal *audiencia* and the Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza, urging his return as very necessary, decided Cortes to abandon further explorations, and after leaving Francisco de Ulloa in California, he returned to Acapulco in the early part of 1537.

He sent three ships, the *Santa Agueda*, *La Trinidad*, and the *Santo Tomas*, back to Francisco de Ulloa in

May of that same year, which after some fruitless cruising about, returned to Acapulco, the whole venture having cost Cortes some two hundred thousand ducats (*Noticia Historica*. Lorenzana Cartas de Cortes, edition 1776). A royal *cedula*, dated April 1, 1539 from Saragossa, provided for the payment of this claim, but remained ineffective (Alaman, *Dissertazioni*. V. Italian translation 1859).

Thus the only results obtained from these various undertakings were debts, and he complained that he had so many that he was obliged to raise money, even on his wife's jewels. He wrote in despair to the Emperor that it was easier to fight the Indians than to contend with His Majesty's officials, and after years of litigation, during which the royal authorities seemed to study how best to vex and circumvent him, and after the series of useless but costly expeditions in the Pacific, he started on his second journey to Spain, which was to be his last.

A very different reception from the former one awaited him, for the Emperor was coldly civil, and the Court in consequence was colder. His constant complaints and demands for satisfaction fell upon deaf or weary ears, for Court favours usually reckon more with present than with past services, and there was nothing more to be obtained from Cortes, who was broken in health and no longer young. At this time, too, Spain was all aflame with excitement over the brilliant achievements of Pizarro in Peru, which eclipsed the familiar exploits in Mexico, now grown stale.

He joined the unsuccessful expedition sent against Algiers in 1541, in which the ship on which he and his sons Martin and Luis sailed was wrecked, together with eleven galleys of Andrea Doria. They barely escaped with their lives, and the five famous emeralds, which constituted an important item in his fortune, and which he always carried on his person, were lost.

The supreme slight of leaving him out of the council of war, summoned to consider the plan of the campaign, was at this time put upon him, and, to his boast that with his Mexican veterans he could take Algiers, one of the generals superciliously replied, that fighting the Moors was different work from killing naked Indians. His situation became less and less worthy, and an anecdote, dramatically illustrating the depth to which he sunk, relates that after vain efforts to get a hearing from the Emperor, he thrust himself forward to the steps of the royal carriage, where upon perceiving him the Sovereign haughtily exclaimed, "And who are you?" to which Cortes proudly answered, "Sire, I am a man who has given Your Majesty more provinces than you possessed cities." What happened next we are not told. If it were true, the incident would picture eloquently the degradation of the greatest captain of his age, forced to waylay his Sovereign at his carriage steps like the meanest beggar. There is no evidence forthcoming, however, to show that any such dialogue was ever spoken. Those who have believed and repeated this story,—and they are many,—have done so on the sole authority of Voltaire, with whom it apparently originated. (*Essai sur les Mœurs*, cap. 147.) He does not indicate from what source the information reached him. The scene as described seems to epitomise a very tragedy of disappointment and humiliation, so despite the staring stamp of fiction it bears, it will doubtless continue to pass for history when less dramatic facts are consigned to forgetfulness. Voltaire sceptically sneered at the credulity of the Spaniards, which enabled them, in the heat of the fight, to see St. James and St. Peter hovering over the Mexican battlefields but he himself had no difficulty in beholding Cortes in such a singularly improbable situation as this story depicts, though indeed nothing that is told of the appearances of those holy apostles seems

further beyond the limits of credibility. As an unheeded suppliant, the Marques suffered snubs enough, without fictitious situations being invented to illustrate his fallen state. One last effort to attract his Sovereign's attention to his claims, and secure the fulfilment of the royal grants and promises, was made in the following pathetic letter,—the last he ever wrote to Charles V.,—to which no response was ever made:

Sacred Catholic Cæsarian Majesty:

I thought that the labour of my youth would have procured me repose in my old age, and thus for forty years I have given myself to God's service, deprived of sleep, eating poorly, and even at times not eating at all, with my arms always at my side, myself exposed to dangers and my fortune sacrificed to bring into His fold the sheep of a distant and unknown hemisphere, of which we even had no record, and to magnify the name, and extend the patrimony of my King by conquering and bringing under his royal yoke and sceptre the great kingdoms and dominions of barbarous peoples. And this I have done at my own expense, unaided in any way, —nay rather hindered by emulous rivals, who like leeches have sucked my very blood.

My hardships and vigils are sufficiently recompensed by God, in that He chose me for this, His work, and though people may attribute some merit to me, it will be clearly seen that not without reason did Divine Providence choose the meanest instrument for its greatest work, so that to God alone might be the glory.

As for the remuneration due me from my King, I have ever been confident that, *cæteris paribus*, it would not be less for being in Your Majesty's reign; for never did these kingdoms of my native Spain, to which these benefits accrue, possess so great and catholic a prince, so magnanimous and powerful a King. Thus when first I kissed Your Majesty's hands, and presented the fruits of my labours, you showed appreciation of them, and demonstrated intentions to recompense me with honours which, as it seemed to me, they

were not equivalent to my deserts, Your Majesty knows I demurred at accepting.

Your Majesty commanded, however, that I should accept them, saying they were not in payment for my services, but to demonstrate your disposition to favour me, for Your Majesty would do as those who when shooting with the crossbow, begin by firing beside the mark, but end by piercing the bull's-eye, for the favours Your Majesty conferred upon me were outside the mark, but would improve until they struck the bull's-eye of my deserts. I was also assured that nothing should be taken from me, and that I must accept what was given me; hence I kissed Your Majesty's hands in gratitude. When you turned your back, all that I had was taken from me, nor were Your Majesty's promises to me fulfilled, for since Your Majesty has such a good memory, you will not have forgotten that besides these words and the promises Your Majesty made me, I possess still more and greater ones in Your Majesty's letters, signed with your Royal name. If my services up to that time merited such acts and the promises Your Majesty made me, they have not since then diminished, for I have never ceased to increase the patrimony of these kingdoms, and had it not been for the thousand obstacles opposed to me, I would have accomplished as much since I received Your Majesty's favours, as I had before done to merit them. I do not know wherefore the promised benefits are now withheld, nor why I am deprived of those I possessed. And if it be said that nothing has been taken since I still possess something, I reply that to have nothing, or to have useless possessions, is one and the same thing, for what I have produces me nothing; better were it to have nothing at all than to have to use its profits to defend myself against Your Majesty's fiscal officers, which indeed is harder than it was to win the country from the Indians. Thus my labour has procured me peace of mind for having done my duty, but has brought me no profit, for not only am I without rest in my old age, but work on until my death, should it not please God to finish me now; for he who is so occupied in defending his body must needs neglect his soul.

I beseech Your Majesty not to requite such conspicuous

services with so small a recompense, and since it must be believed that this is not Your Majesty's fault, let it be known; for, this work which God has accomplished through me is so great and marvellous, and its fame has spread so far through all your kingdoms, and through all Christendom, and even amongst the infidels, that everywhere the dissension between the Royal fisc and me is a subject of scandal. Some blame the fiscal officers, others blame me; but since the blame suffices neither to deprive me of the compensation nor to take from me my life, my honour, and my estate, (since none of this is done), it is clear that the fault is not mine. No one imputes it to Your Majesty, for did you wish to deprive me of all you had given me, the power to do so is yours, and nothing is impossible to your wish and power. To say that a form is sought in which the intention may be realised, does not sound credible, for it suffices for a King anointed of God to declare "thus I will and thus I command," for all to be accomplished without regard to forms.

I beseech that Your Majesty may be pleased to explain in Madrid your intention to requite my services, and I now recall some of these to your memory. Your Majesty told me you would order the Council to despatch my affairs, and I thought this order was given since Your Majesty said that you desired there should be no contention with the fiscal officers. When I asked for information, they told me I must defend myself in a suit against the claim of the fiscal officers, and abide by the sentence of the Court. This seemed to me to be grave, and I wrote to Your Majesty at Barcelona, begging that if Your Majesty was pleased to enter into litigation with your servant, that it should be before judges who were above suspicion, and that Your Majesty should order others to sit with those of the Council for the Indies, and jointly reach a decision. Your Majesty was not pleased to do this, though I cannot divine the cause, since the more numerous the judges the better would be their decision.

I am old and poor, with more than twenty thousand ducats of debts in the kingdom, besides a hundred more which I brought or were sent after me, and of which I also owe something, for they were borrowed to be sent to me. And all draw

interest. During the five years which have elapsed since I left home, my expenses have been great, for I have maintained my three sons at Court, without once leaving, and besides them men of learning, procurators, and solicitors, who were all employed that Your Majesty might make use of them. I also assisted in the expedition to Algiers. It seems to me the fruit of my labours should not be thrown away, or left to the decision of a few, without my again begging that Your Majesty should be pleased to allow that all your judges of the Council should understand this case and decide it justly.

I have heard that the Bishop of Cuenca desired more judges than there are, because it is against him and the licenciate Salmeron, the new auditor of the Indian Council, that I am contending for sums of money, with interest, of which they deprived me when they were judges in New Spain, and it is clear that they cannot be asked to decide against themselves. I have not wished to recuse them in this case, because I always believed Your Majesty would not permit it to reach this stage, but since Your Majesty does not please to increase the number of judges, I am forced to recuse the Bishop of Cuenca and Salmeron, which I do unwillingly as it wastes time. This is the most damaging thing for me at sixty years of age, and, after five years' absence from home. I have but one son to succeed me, and though my wife is young enough to bear more, my age leaves little hope, and should it please God to dispose of this one before the succession, who will profit by what I have acquired? My very memory were lost in the succession of women. Again and again I implore Your Majesty to associate other judges with those of the Council; since all are your servants to whom the direction of your Kingdoms and your Royal conscience is confided, so also may they be trusted to decide upon Your Majesty's grant to your vassal of a part of all which he won for Your Majesty, without labour or cost to your Royal Person, nor the responsibility of directing nor the expense of paying the men, who did the work, and who so loyally made over to Your Majesty, not only the country he conquered, but a vast quantity of gold and silver and jewels which he obtained as spoils.

May Your Majesty also be pleased to order the judges to give their decision within a certain time Your Majesty shall fix and without delay. This will be a great grace to me, for waiting is my loss, as I must return home, being now no longer of an age to travel from inn to inn, but rather to withdraw and settle my account with God, for it is a long one, and little life is left me to discharge it; better to lose my estate than my soul.

May God our Lord guard the Royal Person of Your Majesty, with the extension of your Kingdoms and glory as Your Majesty may desire.

From Valladolid, the 3rd of February, 1544.

Your Catholic Majesty's very humble servant and vassal, who kisses your Royal hands and feet.

THE MARQUES DEL VALLE.

No reply necessary, is the laconic annotation at the bottom of the last page of this letter.

The marriage arranged for his daughter with a son of the Marquis of Astorga was broken off, the bridegroom withdrawing because the full amount of the stipulated dowry was not forthcoming, and after this mortification, Cortes obtained permission to return to Mexico, travelling first to Seville, where he was accorded a public reception. His rapidly failing health made it apparent that his end was approaching, and prompted him to withdraw for quiet to Castelleja de la Cuesta, a small town near Seville, where he died in the house of a magistrate, Juan Rodriguez, in the Calle Real, on the 2nd of December, 1547, attended by his son Don Martin.

Fernando Cortes was a man of medium height, deep chested and slender limbed; his complexion was rather pale, and his expression was serious—even sad, though the glance of his eyes, which in repose were impenetrable, could be kindly and responsive. His hair and beard were dark and rather scanty.

Trained from his youth to the exercise of arms, he was a most dexterous swordsman, very light on his feet, and at home in the saddle.

His speech was calm, nor did he ever use oaths or strong language, nor give away to exhibitions of temper though a mounting flush and the swelling veins of his forehead betrayed his mastered passion when he was vexed, while a characteristic gesture of annoyance or impatience was the casting aside of his cloak.

He dressed with exquisite care and great sobriety, eschewing any excess of ornament. One splendid jewel adorned his hand, a gold medal of the Blessed Virgin, with St. John on the reverse, hung from a finely wrought gold chain around his neck, and just under the feathers of his cap was also a gold medal; these were his only ornaments. He had some knowledge of Latin, and many of the psalms, hymns, and parts of the Church liturgy, which he knew by heart, he was fond of reciting.

Though careless of his food, he was a great eater, but moderate in drinking, and no one could better withstand privations than he, as was constantly shown on his long marches. His chief relaxation was games of chance, in which he indulged habitually, but dispassionately, making either his winnings or losses a subject for jokes and laughter. When strict laws were enacted suppressing gambling in Mexico, his enemies alleged that he himself violated the law, and that the tables and cards were always ready in his own house.

One of the most notable things in his last will is the mention of his doubts about the right of holding slaves. He admonishes his eldest son to look well into the question, and if it should be decided by competent opinion that the practice was wrong, he must act in accordance with strict justice; meanwhile he must give great attention to the welfare and education of his people. He left a foundation and endowment fund for the hospital of Jesus

(*la Concepcion*) in Mexico, and for a college and monastery at Coyohuacan, but the funds ran short, and only the hospital was really established according to his intention. Masses were directed to be said at his father's tomb, and two thousand masses were provided for the souls of those who had fought with him in the conquest, a provision which cannot be considered in excess of their probable spiritual necessities.

In his will it was provided also that his body should be buried wherever he died for a period of ten years, at the expiration of which time his remains were to be taken to Mexico, to be there entombed in the monastery he had founded in Coyohuacan; consequently his body was first laid to rest with fitting ceremonies in the family Chapel of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia, in the Church of San Isidro at Seville.

The following epitaph was composed by his son Martin:

Padre, cuya suerte impropiamente
Aqueste bajo mundo poseía,
Valor que nuestra edad enriquecía
Descansa ahora en paz, eternamente.
(Andres Calvo, *Los Tres Siglos da Mexico.*)

There his body lay, until by order of his son Don Martin Cortes, second Marques del Valle, it was removed in 1562 to Mexico, but, contrary to the provisions in the will, the place of sepulture was chosen in the monastery of St. Francis in Texcoco, where his mother and one of his daughters were already buried.

In 1629 Don Pedro Cortes fourth Marques del Valle died in Mexico, and with his death the male descendance of Cortes came to an end.

It was decided between the Viceroy, the Marques de Cerralbo, and the Archbishop of Mexico, D. Francisco Manso de Zuñiga, to translate the body of the Conqueror

to the capital and bury it together with that of his last descendant in the Church of St. Francis.

An elaborate funeral procession was organised, which set forth from the Cortes palace headed by all the religious associations and confraternities, carrying their respective banners, after which followed the civil tribunals. Next came the Archbishop accompanied by the cathedral chapter in full canonicals. The body of Don Pedro Cortes was exposed to view in an open coffin carried by knights of the chapter of Santiago, while the coffin of his great ancestor covered with a black velvet pall was borne by the royal judges, escorted by standard bearers carrying a white banner on which were embroidered the figures of the Blessed Virgin and St. John; another displaying the royal arms of Spain and a third of black velvet showing the arms of the Marques del Valle. Members of the University followed, and the procession closed with the Viceroy and all his court with an escort of soldiers carrying arms reversed and banners trailing. This funeral pageant—probably the most magnificent ever seen in the new world—advanced to the accompaniment of muffled drums and solemn chantings, halting at six different places for brief religious rites.

During more than a century and a half the bones of Cortes were left undisturbed, until in 1794 they were moved once more, and this time to the hospital of Jesus of Nazareth, which he had founded and endowed, and in whose chapel a monument was prepared to receive the body, which was coffined in a crystal case riveted with silver bars. Would that this translation had been the last, and that the pilgrimages of this poor body had ended within the walls its owner's piety had built.

During the period of unrest which followed immediately upon the establishment of Mexican independence, a design was said to have been formed by some "patriots" to rifle the tomb, and scatter the conqueror's ashes to

the winds, of which profanation the authorities were said to be aware, but either unwilling or unable to prevent it. Others contrived to forestall the threatened violation, and from 1823 the body of Cortes disappeared. Señor Garcia Icazbalceta wrote to Mr. Henry Harrisse upon the subject saying:

> The place of the present sepulture of Cortes is wrapped in mystery. Don Lucas Alaman has told the history of the remains of this great man. Without positively saying so, he lets it be understood that they were taken to Italy.
>
> It is generally believed that the bones of Cortes are in Palermo. But some persons insist that they are still in Mexico, hidden in some place absolutely unknown. Notwithstanding the friendship with which Señor Alaman has honoured me, I never could obtain from him a positive explanation; he would always find some pretext to change the conversation.

Señor Alaman's description of what occurred in 1823 is substantially as follows:

Early in the year 1822 discussions began in the Mexican Congress, in which the project of destroying the monument in the hospital (of Jesus) chapel was mooted; in the month of August of that year, Father Mier, in the hope of forestalling the intended desecration, proposed that the monument should be transferred to the National Museum. The following year, 1823, was marked by the transport to the capital of the remains of the patriots who had proclaimed the independence of 1810, and certain newspapers published violent articles, inciting the people to celebrate this event by rifling the tomb of the Conqueror, and burning his body at St. Lazaro. Fearing the execution of this threat, which would have left an indelible stain on the national honour, the Vicar General directed the chaplain of the hospital to conceal the body in a secure place, and both Señor Alaman himself and Count Fernando Lucchesi, who represented the Duke of Terranova's interests in

Mexico at that time, assisted at the temporary hiding away of the remains under the steps of the altar. The bust and arms of gilded bronze were sent to the Duke of Terranova in Palermo, and the dismantled monument remained in the chapel until 1833, when it also disappeared (Alaman *Dissertazioni sulla Storia del Messico Dissert. V.*, Italian translation by Pelaez, 1859).

Thus far Señor Alaman is as explicit as possible, but concerning the final resting place of the body he says nothing whatever on his own account, closing the subject by introducing a quotation from Dr. Mora (who, he says, was the first to publish these facts), which states that "afterwards the remains were sent to his family."

In the collaborated work published under the special direction of Don Vincente Riva Palacio, entitled *Mexico a Traves los Siglos*, it is stated in a note on page 353 of the second volume, that Cortes's body was sent to the Duke of Monteleone in Italy in 1823. ("*fueren rimitidos a Italia a la casa de los Duques de Monteleone*"). In the chapters of the fourth volume, which chronicle the events of the year 1823, no mention is made of this occurrence, which it would surely seem was of sufficient importance to merit notice. Neither Mr. Prescott nor Sir Arthur Helps, nor any other as far as I can discover, has left a record of any attempts to clear up this mystery.

If the remains of the conqueror were taken to Palermo or consigned to the family of the Dukes of Monteleone, there is no record of the transaction, nor is any tradition of it known, even by hearsay, to the present members of the family, or to the keepers of the family archives.

Not the least of the glories of the Pignatelli family, which has kept its place among the foremost of Sicily and Naples, is their descent from the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, and it seems inadmissible that the body of this illustrious ancestor should arrive at Palermo as recently as 1823, be buried nobody knows where, and no

record of any sort be kept of such an important and interesting event in the annals of the family. The absence, therefore, of any record, or even oral tradition, of such an event seems to be at least a negative proof that it never took place. It is quite thinkable that the custodians of the hospital chapel, where the body lay in 1823, should have invented and circulated the fiction of its transport out of the country to convince the intending desecrators that it had been put beyond their reach; meanwhile it was easy to hide the coffin in some secret place, doubtless within the walls of the hospital itself, where it may still lie in a forgotten grave. The legend of the transport to Italy and the burial in Palermo being thus started and doubtless diligently spread with a purpose, encountered no contradiction, and, with the death of the necessarily few persons who possessed the secret, all knowledge of the facts was lost, while the invention passed from legend into history, and has been commonly accepted and quoted. Señor Garcia Icazbalceta's letter to Mr. Harrisse does, however, state that "some persons insist that they are still in Mexico hidden in some place absolutely unknown," and these persons are doubtless right. Why Señor Alaman should have made any mystery about the matter, even with his friend Icazbalceta, does not seem easy to explain, especially if he knew the body to be in Palermo. If Señor Alaman knew the body was in Mexico, but wished to encourage the belief that it was in Palermo, his reticence with Señor Garcia Icazbalceta is explicable, for it must also be borne in mind that he never positively said he knew it to be in Palermo,—he merely gave it to be understood that he thought so by quoting Dr. Mora, who stated the fact without offering any proofs of its truth. If he wished what he knew was not true to be believed, his regard for truth forbade his going to the length of a positive statement, but he might feel justified for motives which, what-

ever they were, in the first half of the last century, have no existence now, in encouraging the spread of the Palermo legend. Or it may also well be that Señor Alaman was partly convinced by what he heard that the body was in Palermo, but in the face of the contrary assertions made by some persons, and the absence of any authentic record of the transaction, was reluctant to commit himself to a positive statement.

The Republic of Mexico has emerged from its state of infancy, and has successfully survived the periods of trials, and perilous struggles, which all new nations must traverse to reach the state of permanent and prosperous peace, indispensable to national greatness. The four hundredth anniversary of the discovery and conquest, which looms in sight, will find her in the foremost ranks of the republics of the New World, and these great events will doubtless be commemorated by becoming celebrations, which shall suitably revive the memory of the great Conqueror, and his intrepid allies of Tlascala. If there be any clue or trace by which the body of Cortes can be found, it should be diligently followed up, until the remains are recovered and restored to the place of honour in the national pantheon.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF FERNANDO CORTES MARQUES DEL VALLE DE OAXACA

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

IN the name of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are three persons and one, only, and true God Whom I hold, believe, and confess to be my true God and Redeemer, and of the most glorious and fortunate Virgin His Blessed Mother, our Lady and Advocate.

Let all who may see this Testament know that I, Don Fernando Cortes, Marques del Valle de Oaxaca, Captain General of New Spain and the South Sea for the Cæsarian Majesty of the Emperor Charles, fifth of this name, my sovereign Prince and Lord, being ill, but in such free and sound judgment with which it has pleased God to endow me, fearing death, as is natural to every creature, and desiring to prepare myself against such time as it may please God to call me hence, do for the good of my soul, and the peace and discharge of my conscience, execute, and recognise this document which I do make, and order as my last testament and final will, in the following form and manner.

I. First I direct that, should I die in the Spanish realm, my body shall be interred in the church of that parish wherein shall stand the house in which I die, and that there it shall remain until such time as it may please my successor to transport my bones to New Spain; this I charge and direct him to do within ten years and sooner if possible, and that he transport them thence to my town of Coyoacan, and there give them sepulture in the monastery of the nuns called La Concepcion, of the order of St. Francis which I have founded in my said town, with provision for the interment of myself and my successors.

II. Item: I direct that should it please God that my end and death should take place in this realm of Spain, my burial shall be attended to, according to the provisions of those

gentlemen whom I have named my executors, or of any one of them who may be present, and that everything suitable thereto be decently ordered.

III. I direct, furthermore, that the beneficed clergy and chaplains of the parish church of the town or place where I die shall carry my body, and that all the monks of the religious Orders shall also march in procession, headed by the cross, and assist at the obsequies which shall be celebrated; and I direct that the usual alms may be given to the said religious orders according to the judgment of my said executors.

IV. Item: I direct that, on the day of my death, fifty poor men be provided out of my means with full gowns of grey cloth, with large hoods of the same, and shall accompany my funeral procession bearing lighted torches, after which each shall receive one *real*.

V. Item: I direct that on the same day of my funeral, if it should take place before midday, and otherwise on the day following, all the masses possible shall be said in all the churches and monasteries of the said city or town or place of my death; and besides these masses, five thousand more shall be said on successive days in the following manner: one thousand for the souls in purgatory, two thousand for the souls of those who lost their lives serving under me in the discoveries and conquests which I made in New Spain, and the two remaining thousand for the souls of all towards whom I have obligations of which I am ignorant or forgetful; those which I do know and remember shall be discharged as I direct in this my testament. My executors shall recompense the said five thousand masses according to custom, and I beg them in all that concerns my funeral to suppress the worldly pomps, and devote money rather to the good of souls.

VI. Item: On the said day of my burial my executors shall furnish all my own servants and those of my sons with a suitable mourning dress, as they shall judge proper, and during six succeeding months, my servants shall continue to receive their usual stipend with their food and drink, exactly as during my lifetime. Those who do not remain in the service

of my son and successor Don Martin shall receive their payment in full on the day they leave his service.

VII. Item: I direct that when my bones shall be transported to New Spain for interment in the monastery church of Coyoacan, which I direct to be built, that this shall be done by order of the Marquesa Doña Juana de Zuñiga, my wife, and in such wise as she or my son or my successor at that time, whichever of them may be living at that time, shall direct.

VIII. Item: I direct that the bones of Doña Catalina Pizarro my lady mother, and those of Don Luis my son, which are buried in the monastery church of St. Francis in Texcoco, and those of Doña Catalina my daughter which are in the monastery of Cuahuanavac (Cuernavaca), be brought, and buried in my sepulchre in the said monastery which I found in my town of Coyoacan.

IX. Item: I direct that the hospital of Our Lady of the Conception, which I directed to be founded in the city of Mexico in New Spain, shall be finished at my cost according to the plan drawn. The principal chapel of its church shall be completed according to the model in wood made by Pedro Vasquez Jumetrico, and the plan described in the letter which I sent to New Spain, in this present year 1547. For these costs I set apart especially the rents deriving from my shops and houses in the said city, situated in the square and street of Tacuba and San Francisco, and in the street which unites them; this income shall be given exclusively to the said works until they are completed, nor shall my successor employ them for any other purposes. But it is my wish and will that the expenditure be made by my successor as patron of the hospital, and, when the works are finished according to the said plans, that the same rents shall be devoted to providing revenues for the wants of the administration, and the direction of the said hospital, following in this institution the order laid down by me before a notary public. Failing this, I direct that the same system of administration be adopted as that which obtains in the hospital of the Five Wounds, founded by Doña Catalina de Rivera (may she have glory), for maintaining the administrators, chaplains,

and other officers and servants attached to the said hospital.

X. Item: I direct that in the chapel of the monastery of St. Francis in Medellin, where my father Martin Cortes is buried, the memorial masses, for which I leave provision, shall be celebrated yearly in perpetuity. My successor or successors shall for all time see to this, for which purpose I name, as patron of the said chapel, my son and successor Don Martin Cortes, and after him those who shall follow him in the succession. He, holding the said patronage (or those who succeed him by right of primogeniture), may name as his substitute for the exercise of the said patronage such person or persons as may be desirable for such time as may please him, and hold full power to revoke such appointment whenever he may so desire, substituting any other who is deemed suitable. Such person, thus appointed, shall, in the absence of the head of my house, hold the same power and faculties as the said patron himself, for such time as his appointment may last.

XI. Item: I declare that since Almighty God Our Lord has vouchsafed to advance and favour me in the discovery and conquest of New Spain, and I have always received from His merciful hand very great favours and mercies, both in my victories over the enemies of His Holy Catholic Faith, and in the pacification and settlement of those kingdoms, from which I hope great service may accrue to God our Lord, I order that the following works be undertaken in grateful recognition of those said favours and mercies, and also to discharge and satisfy my conscience for whatsoever faults or burdens may lie thereon, but of which my memory no longer takes account to enable me to specify them:

XII. I order and direct that, in addition to the aforesaid hospital which I have already provided shall be built in the city of Mexico, a monastery of the nuns of the Conception, belonging to the Order of St. Francis, shall be built in my town of Coyoacan, in such place, and according to such plan as I shall indicate; and should I not leave these instructions, then I direct that my successor or his deputy shall found and build it, providing a community with such endowment as

shall be required. I designate the said monastery in my town of Coyoacan as my place of sepulture, which I direct shall be in the major chapel of the church of the said monastery, where no other persons except my legitimate descendants may be buried.

XIII. Item: I direct that a college shall be built in my said town of Coyoacan for students of theology and canon law; that there may be learned persons to officiate in the churches, and to train and instruct the natives in our Holy Catholic Faith. This college shall be provided with faculties, and receive a number of students, and the rules and constitutions which I shall establish for it shall be observed. It shall be built in such place, and after a plan suitable to the said institution, and with such regulations and ordinances as I shall prescribe, and, if perchance I should not explain these, I direct that my successor or his deputy shall organise and build it, adopting the statutes, constitutions, and ordinances governing the college of Santa Maria de Jesus founded in this city of Seville. The costs and expenses of the said college shall be covered and supplied from the rents which will be designated.

XIV. Item: I destine, for the endowment of the said hospital of Our Lady of the Conception which I am building in Mexico, two front ground plots of the houses of Jorge Alvarado, and of the treasurer Juan Alonso de Sosa, between my house and the aqueduct which extends to the houses of Don Luis Saavedra, which being now unoccupied, I assume the obligation to construct such buildings as may amply suffice for the said endowment. During such time as the said buildings are not constructed, the said hospital shall receive support from my estate to the amount of one hundred thousand *maravedis* of good money. I direct that the said endowment shall be furnished as is provided, and with the conditions I shall hereafter state, and I direct that my successor shall be free at any time to allot the said hospital some part of the said one hundred thousand *maravedis* income, in lieu of the said buildings, should he so desire, affecting this substitution in any assured manner he may wish.

XV. Item: as, likewise, I have stated and bound myself

to furnish to the said hospital lands near the city of Mexico, producing three hundred thousand *fanegas* of wheat, as is set forth in the said endowment to which I refer, I direct that this obligation be fulfilled, and I assign for such purpose a piece of land, which I own, at the extremity of Coyoacan, situated between that town, and the river which crosses the road leading to Chapultepec. Should this not suffice, the amount shall be completed, at the option of my successor, from other lands where I have had, and have, my plantations, situated beyond the said river in the direction of Chapultepec. Should my successor or successors at any time wish to substitute for the said hospital, as required by the endowment, other lands producing three hundred thousand *fanegas* of wheat, this may be done, on condition that they are as good as those I have designated. As I do not know whether some part of the lands, indicated and named by me for the said hospital, may not belong to me as Señor (proprietary lord) of that place, or by other title, I direct that any such be restored to their owners, who shall be paid the full value to their satisfaction. As I have worked such lands, profiting by them, under the belief that I might do so with a clear conscience, I direct that the rightful owners of the said lands be repaid the amount it may be shown I have derived from them, so that my conscience may be clean; my said successor shall be obliged, should these lands be shown not to belong to me, to make good the amount provided in the act of endowment to the said hospital.

XVI. Item: I declare and say that, as has been stated, the construction of the said hospital in Mexico shall be completed in the said city as above mentioned out of the rents of the lands and buildings I own in the square and streets of Tacuba and San Francisco; and this construction completed, the income from the said shops and buildings shall revert to my successor or successors. They shall henceforth devote this entire sum annually to the construction of the monastery of nuns, and of the above mentioned college which I directed to be founded and built in my said town of Coyoacan, using and distributing the sums necessary to put them in possession.

XVII. And, that the works of the said hospital, mon-

astery, and college above described may be speedily completed, and the service of God our Lord thereby promoted, as it is hoped, I direct that, in addition to the four thousand *ducats* derived from the buildings already indicated for the works of the said hospital in Mexico, and the said college and monastery in Coyoacan, six thousand *ducats* more shall be used from my estate each year from the date of my death, so that in all there will thus be ten thousand *ducats* devoted to this purpose; four thousand from the income of the shops and buildings for the work on the said hospital until it is finished; three thousand for the construction of the said monastery of nuns; and the remaining three thousand for the building of the said college. When the work on the said hospital shall be terminated, the four thousand *ducats* set apart therefor shall be divided into equal parts, and devoted to the works on the said monastery and college, so that each of these may thus dispose of five thousand *ducats* yearly. These works being completed, in order to relieve my successor of the obligation of continuing from thenceforth forever to give the six thousand and the four thousand *ducats* from the income of the said shops and buildings, these sums shall be distributed as follows: one thousand *ducats* for the endowment and estates of the said monastery of nuns which, as has been said, I directed to be founded in my town of Coyoacan; two thousand *ducats* for the endowment and expenses of the said college which I directed to be founded in the same town; and another thousand *ducats* do I adjudge to the said hospital of the Conception which I directed to be founded in the said city of Mexico. This last shall be with such condition that, by a yearly payment of this sum, the obligation assumed by me and my successor and successors (to build for the endowment of the said hospital certain houses, and two front ground plots of the houses of Jorge de Alvarado and the treasurer Juan de Sosa) may be acquitted, as well our obligation to provide one hundred thousand *maravedis* of annual income to the said hospital should we fail to construct the said buildings. This is also that I and my successor and successors may be released from the obligation, which I assumed when I endowed the said hospital, of giving it certain lands near the city of Mexico,

yielding three hundred *fanegas* of wheat; for it is my wish and intention that, by giving the said hospital an annual income in perpetuity of one thousand *ducats*, I and my successor and successors may be released from all claim upon the said houses, or in lieu of them, the said one hundred thousand *maravedis*, and the said lands producing three hundred *fanegas* of wheat; all of which both in whole and in part I direct shall return to the possession and enjoyment of my successor and successors. Should the said hospital not desist from such claim, I direct that this provision and endowment of one thousand *ducats* yearly income shall be of no value or effect, but this sum shall revert to my successor or successors.

XVIII. Item: I say that, inasmuch as it is seen by experience that the revenues from lands and houses, both in Spain and in New Spain, increase daily, my shops and buildings, above mentioned, may become of greater value, and yield an income exceeding the amount of four thousand *ducats* which I devise and give forevermore, as is attested by the endowments of the said monastery of nuns, the said college, and the said hospital, and it is my will that should the said shops and buildings become more valuable and yield more rent, that the excess of value and rent, over and above the said four thousand *ducats*, shall be divided as follows: two parts of the said excess to go to the said college and of the remaining two parts one each to the said monastery of nuns and to the said hospital.

XIX. Item: I say and direct that, by virtue of the grant made to me by the Emperor our King, and Lord of the towns therein mentioned, his rights of patronage over the churches of the said towns belong to me in conformity with a clause of the said grant, in which it is declared that I possess in those towns all the rights, contributions, and customs, and everything else which His Majesty has or may have in the other towns of New Spain, which, excepting the mines and salt, remain the property of his royal crown. Thus, except these two things specified in the grant, the right of patronage belonging to him, belongs for the same reason to me. In addition to the grant made me by His Majesty, I hold the said rights of patronage by concession of His Holiness, the bull

for which is deposited with His Majesty, and his Council for the Indies, that they may recognise as valid the said concession. I desire, and it is my will, that my successor or successors, may have and preserve forever the said right of patronage. As, at the time I solicited the concession from His Holiness, it was my intention that the natives of those towns should be better instructed in the doctrines of our Holy Catholic Faith, I direct and charge Don Martin, my son, and successor and successors, to have very special care of this, conferring the benefices of the said towns upon able men of good life and example, with the obligation to daily instruct the said natives; and that they take great care to oversee and ascertain very particularly how this is done and fulfilled. As the said concession from His Holiness says that I and my heirs and successors should have and receive the tithes and first fruits from the said towns, comprised in the right of patronage for the endowment of the churches, I direct that dowries, vestments, and other things necessary for the cult, and the wine for the administration of the Sacraments, be all provided for out of the said tithes and first fruits. During such time as this is not complied with, through no fault of my successor or successors, the said tithes and first fruits may not be employed otherwise, for, from this time forth and forever, I destine and apply these to provide the said churches with all whatsoever belongs to or concerns them in so far as may be necessary for the purposes above expressed, the control and enjoyment of the said right of patronage remaining to my successors the same as it has been conceded to me; hence it is my will that whatever may remain of the said titles and first fruits of these churches, over and above the expenses above set forth, being properties dedicated to God Our Lord, and to His holy temples, shall be used and distributed in works of His service, and for no other purpose I say therefor and direct that such surplus of tithes and first fruits, after each year's expenditure for the above mentioned objects, shall be adjudged perpetually by my successor or successors or their deputies as follows:—one half to the endowment of the said college, and the remainder divided equally between the said monastery, and the said hospital, in the same proportion as the

division which is made of the rents from the said shops and buildings.

XX. Item: I direct that ten thousand *ducats* be paid to my wife, the Marquesa Doña Juana de Zuñiga, which sum I received as her dowry; forasmuch as I received and expended them, and they belong to her, I direct that they be paid without dispute or question from the first and best properties of my estate.

XXI. Item: I say that, since, between Don Pedro Alvarez Osorio, marques de Astorga, and myself, it has been arranged and concerted that his eldest son and heir, Don Alvaro Perez Osorio, should marry Doña Maria Cortes, legitimate daughter of myself and the Marquesa Doña Juana de Zuñiga, my wife, and the conditions of this marriage have been set forth in a contract, it is my will that it should be fulfilled according to the stipulations; and as I have agreed and promised one hundred thousand *ducats* as a dower for the said Doña Maria, my daughter, of which the marques de Astorga, conformably to the said stipulations, has already received twenty thousand *ducats*, I desire that before everything else the remaining eighty thousand *ducats* be paid from the estates of the said marquesa, my wife, and from my own to complete the said dower, at the time and in the manner provided in the said contract. These sums shall be charged against the legitimate share of our estates which would belong to my daughter Doña Maria.

XXII. As I am obliged to dower Doña Catalina and Doña Juana, the legitimate daughters of myself and my wife, the said marquesa, I direct that, in discharge of this obligation as best I can, each of them shall receive fifty thousand *ducats*, making one hundred thousand for both; for which purpose I transfer this sum irrevocably during my lifetime to Melchor de Mojica, my administrator and secretary, who is here present and accepts the same in my name. These hundred thousand *ducats* may be taken from the joint estate of the marquesa my wife, and mine, and charged against the share her legitimate daughters would have of our estate. Failing the necessary sum, at the time of my death, to pay these hundred thousand *ducats*, I desire that whatever is wanting shall be

paid by my son and successor, Don Martin, or whatever other successor, by setting apart from my estate fifteen thousand *ducats* yearly, until the full amount of one hundred thousand *ducats* be made up, as said above.

I, Melchor de Mojica accept and receive the said dower of one hundred thousand *ducats* in the name of the said ladies, Doña Catalina and Doña Juana, as set forth in this article, and, in witness and confirmation of the same, I here sign my name.

Melchor de Mojica.

XXIII. Item: I direct, and place as a charge on my successor, and on the income of my estate, an annual pension of one thousand *ducats* in gold to each of my natural sons, Don Martin and Don Luis Cortes, for their lifetime, or until each of them may have an income of over five thousand *maravedis*. I direct that these sums be paid, free from any tax of any sort, annually; and from this time forth I establish them as theirs, from the best share of my rents. I direct that my sons, Don Martin and Don Luis, be subject and obedient to my successor in everything, in which they honestly may, as to the chief and head of the family from which they spring, and that for no reason shall they disobey or fail in their respect to him, but shall assist and serve him in everything not contrary to God Our Lord, or His holy religion, and Catholic Faith, or against their rightful king; and I direct that should either show notorious disobedience or disrespect, such as may be proven as such, they shall lose the benefits and substance they receive, and shall be considered as strangers to my house and children.

XXIV. Item: I direct that marriages for my daughters, Doña Catalina and Doña Juana. are to he arranged only upon the counsel, and with the approval, of the marquesa, their mother, and of my successor. Should either of them marry outside this condition, my successor shall not be obliged to pay anything of the dower I have provided.

XXV. Item: I direct that Doña Catalina Pizarro, my daughter by Leonor Pizarro, wife of Juan de Salcedo, a citizen of Mexico, be given the full amount of the income and increase of the cows, mares, and ewes which I gave her when she first

came to the kingdom of Mexico, together with the income from the town of Chinantla, and all else that I assigned for her marriage dower and delivered to the said Juan de Salcedo, husband of Doña Leonor Pizarro, her mother. And, as I have received from the increase on the said ranches a number of horses, bulls, rams, and monies, I direct that this amount be repaid out of my estate, to my daughter Doña Catalina, according to the account presented by the said Juan de Salcedo, at the price they were worth when I received them. I confess, now, that two receipts, made to me by Hernando de Saavedra, and Gil Gonzale de Benevides, for a certain amount in gold for some cows which I sold them at four different times, as will appear from the said receipts, really belong to the estate and increase of my daughter Doña Catalina, although they are made out to me; and I therefore direct that they be paid to her with interest, being hers, and coming from her estate. The amounts of the said receipts are two thousand *pesos* of good gold for the one, and two thousand seven hundred and fifty for the other.

XXVI. Item: I acknowledge another receipt from Francisco de Villegas, citizen of Mexico, given me for two thousand *pesos* in gold for some cows, of which, according to Juan de Salcedo's statement, he only owes one thousand, as he did not receive the full number of cows sold to him, which coming also from the property of my daughter, Doña Catalina, I order be paid to her.

XXVII. Item: I also acknowledge another receipt, of four hundred *pesos*, made me by Bernardino del Castillo, for mares, likewise coming from the property of my daughter, Doña Catalina; I order that this be paid to her.

XXVIII. Item: I acknowledge another receipt, for two thousand four hundred *pesos* in gold, given me by Alonzo Dávalos, for twelve mares and six fillies, coming from the property of my daughter, Doña Catalina; I order that this be paid to her.

XXIX. Item: I declare that all the cows and flocks at Matalango belong to my daughter, Doña Catalina, and to the said Leonor Pizarro, besides all the mares and colts at Taltizapan, which bear her brand of a large *E* on the haunch.

XXX. Item: I declare that, of the receipt made by Gil Gonzale de Benevides with Hernando de Saavedra, which, as above said, belongs to my daughter, Doña Catalina, three hundred and fifty *castellanos* in gold have been paid, which I received in four horses which I possess; I order that this be paid to the said Doña Catalina.

XXXI. Item: I declare that I gave a final quittance to the said Juan de Salcedo, citizen of Mexico, husband of the said Leonor Pizarro, stating that I gave and give it him in full receipt for all accounts he had with the estate and goods of Doña Catalina Pizarro, my daughter, which were delivered to him. I say that I gave the said final quittance, notwithstanding I was not disposed to give it without the accounts and payments, at the instance and entreaty of the said Juan de Salcedo, to save him the necessity of rendering the said accounts during my absence; for which he promised, under oath, that, on my return from my journey, he would present them in full, without fraud nor taking anything from the said Doña Catalina; and this he did, with Andres de Tapia present as witness.

XXXII. Item: I direct that, when it may please Our Lord that the said Doña Catalina, my daughter, should marry, she shall do so on the counsel, and with the consent of my successor, whom I beg to take special care to provide that his sister Catalina marries as becomes the honour of our house and her own.

XXXIII. Item: I direct that my natural daughters, Doña Leonor and Doña Maria, shall receive as dowries, each, ten thousand *ducats* from my estate, recommending them to marry with the counsel and consent of my said successor, whom I charge as in the former article touching his sister, Doña Catalina. Should either or both die before marrying, or desire to enter the religious life, let them receive for their support and expenses sixty thousand *maravedis* yearly; the remainder reverting to my son and successor Don Martin, and those who follow him.

XXXIV. Item: I direct that, as some persons have served on my farming estates, and I do not know whether they have been paid, the conditions agreed upon with me or

my administrators at the time of their engagement shall be ascertained, and that they be paid as the books of the administration show to be just, without wearying them with more controversy than is required to discover the truth. This to be done on the conscience of my successor and executors, without their being obliged to give any other account than that they have paid them.

XXXV. Item: I direct that all debts as shall appear from my account books, owing to people in my service, both here in Spain and in New Spain, shall be paid in accordance with the conditions established when they entered my service, and that this be done without delay or dispute. As Bernardino del Castillo was engaged in taking account of all that the licenciate Don Juan Altamirano has furnished and sent me, I direct that the statement of the said licenciate be accepted.

XXXVI. Item: I direct that all my debts of whatever nature public and private, when shewn to be justly mine, be paid without delay or process of law, but quickly and without incurring expense. As I may have debts for which I have no written proof, I direct that all such, if shewn to be mine, even without writing, be paid without process of law, up to the amount of one hundred *pesos* in good money.

XXXVII. Item: I say that I have spent large sums of money in New Spain and its provinces, which I conquered and brought under the dominion of the royal crown of Castile, both in the conquest, as well as in the armadas which I sent elsewhere, such as those I sent to Amaluco (Molucca Island), under the captain Alvaro de Saavedra, and one sent to Hibueras, with settlers commanded by Geronimo Prima, and another to the same province of Hibueras, of which Francisco de las Casas was captain. All were sent by order of our lord the Emperor, as may be seen from his royal instructions and signature, and as His Majesty, to discharge his royal conscience, and as a most Christian prince, sent me his royal *cedula*, which is among the papers in possession of the licenciate Juan Altamirano, and an order of his royal council, authorised an account to be made with me of all I have spent in the said conquests and armadas, I direct that this account be made

and presented to His Majesty, since he was pleased to order payment to me. This sum I wish and direct to go to my heir, the said Don Martin Cortes, my son and successor in my house and estate, and to the successors who shall follow him.

XXXVIII. Item: I direct that the said Don Martin, my son, (and those who may succeed), shall have the following upon his conscience: His Majesty granted me the towns, places, and lands of the estate I have and own in New Spain, with all the rents, rights, tributes, and contributions belonging to His Majesty, exactly as the former rulers used to receive them before the conquest. I have used all diligence to verify the said rents, tributes, rights, and contributions which those rulers enjoyed, and I was careful to continue the former masters where such tributes and rents are usually paid, in agreement with whom I have collected the said rents and tributes until today. I direct that, if it shall at any time appear that I was badly informed as to the above, and have taken anything not belonging to me, of which I was until today unaware, thinking I took my rights, it shall be rectified.

XXXIX. Item: as there have been many doubts and opinions as to whether it is permitted with a good conscience to hold the natives as slaves, whether captives of war or by purchase, and up till now this has not been determined, I direct my son and successor Don Martin, and those who may follow him, to use all diligence to settle this point for the peace of my conscience and their own.

XL. Item: I direct that, as in some places on my estates pieces of ground have been taken for orchards, vineyards, cotton-fields and other purpose, it must be ascertained whether such lands belonged to the natives of those towns, and, if so, I order that they be restored, with all such profits their owners might have derived from them, compensating, and receiving in total, discharge of all the rents and tributes which they were obliged to pay for them; and, in the case of Bernardino del Castillo, my servant, to whom, in past years, I gave a piece of land, situated on the outskirts of Coyoacan, on which he built a sugar mill, I order that this be done should it appear that the land belongs to third parties.

XLI. Item: I direct that, as I have received, in addition to the tributes paid me by vassals, other services both personal and real, and as on this point also opinions differ as to whether such may be accepted with a good conscience, this matter shall be investigated, and, if it appears that I have received more of such services than belonged to me, those natives shall be paid and indemnified in all that it shall appear they may justly claim.

XLII. Item: I direct that all my account books be examined, especially a large one in possession of Francisco de Santa Cruz, which my secretary and scrivener Juan de Rivera began, but which passed to the said Francisco de Santa Cruz, who keeps my said books. I order that all debts found therein, due to all persons whatsoever shall be paid, and likewise that all debts due to me be collected; and, I order that the said Francisco de Santa Cruz render his accounts for the time he has had charge of my business, and everything be settled with him, and that all on our side and the other be paid.

XLIII. Item: I say that, inasmuch as I loaned Bernardino del Castillo at the time of his marriage one thousand *castellanos* in gold and silver, besides six hundred more in furnishings for the shop next to the clock tower, as will appear from a receipt signed with his name, and deposited with the licenciate Juan Altamirano, he shall be credited with what I owe him for the time of his service which may be determined by a receipt signed by me when I left Coyoacan, and the remainder shall go to my successor.

XLIV. Item: I direct that, for as long as Doña Elvira de Hermosa, daughter of Luis de Hermosa, citizen of Avila, who is now maid to the marquesa, my wife, shall remain in the service of any of my daughters or of the wife of Don Martin, she shall be paid twenty thousand *maravedis* annually; and should she desire to become a nun, or to live unmarried in this city, she shall be paid from my estate two hundred thousand *maravedis* besides giving her the twenty thousand *maravedis* annually.

XLV. Item: I direct that, for as long as my cousin Cecilia Vazquez Altamirano may desire to remain with the marquesa, my wife, or with any of my daughters, or the wife of

Don Martin, she shall enjoy the same respect I have ever shown her; and I desire that, wherever she may choose to live, one thousand *maravedis* shall be surely and regularly paid her annually from my estate.

XLVI. Item: I direct that two hundred thousand *maravedis* be paid from my estate to each of the two daughters of the administrator, Juan Altamirano, my cousin, for their dowry, and marriage portion.

XLVII. Item: I direct that, for as long as the said Juan Altamirano may wish to retain the charge of the administration in my household, this shall be allowed him, and, with the profit assigned him by my *cedula*, shall be continued to him for as long as he may wish.

XLVIII. Item: I direct that three hundred thousand *maravedis* be paid to Doña Beatriz, and Doña Luisa, her sister, daughters of the marquesa my wife, to enable them to marry, two hundred thousand to the said Doña Luisa and to the said Doña Beatriz one hundred thousand *maravedis*.

XLIX. Item: I direct that, if Maria de Torres, now duenna with the marquesa, should wish to remain in her service, or in that of any of my daughters, or the wife of my son and successor, she be paid annually fifteen thousand *maravedis*, and should she want something for herself, she shall be given one hundred thousand whenever she wishes, in recognition of her past services, without subtracting any sums she may have received in that time, nor the fifteen thousand which I provide for the time she shall continue in service.

L. Item: I say that, as in the year 1542, while I was in Barcelona, Gonzalo Diaz my equerry was short forty *ducats* of my money which was placed in his hands, I ordered this amount to be deducted from his pay, and, although he sustained no harm, I now pardon him, and direct that no deduction of this sum be made in his accounts, and if any has already been made to cancel it, and pay him in full; besides which, I leave him as a mark of favour one hundred *ducats* in gold, to be paid him from my estate.

LI. Item: I direct that, although in the year 1544 my groom of the chambers gave me his note for forty-four

thousand five hundred and twenty *maravedis* for the value of certain pieces of silver for which he could not account when he was my plate-butler, for which he therefore owed me, nevertheless in consideration of his service, I forgive him that obligation, and pardon him, and he shall receive back his note, and be paid twenty *ducats* in gold from my estate.

LII. Item: I direct that, besides paying Geronimo de Andrada what is owing on his account he be given from my estate thirty *ducats* in gold, which I leave him in recognition of his services.

LIII. Item: I say inasmuch as there is a suit with the wife and heirs of the licenciate Nuñez, member of the council, who was my solicitor, concerning certain of our accounts, which showed him my debtor for large sums, and although I am well informed, and have a clear conscience, nor on my side has this suit been sustained through malice, but only to have justice, that, nevertheless I direct, if the widow and heirs of the licenciate Nuñez wish to settle our suit amiably, that two accountants be chosen to act for them with two of mine, to whom all necessary papers shall be given, and whose decision shall be accepted as final without other legal action. Should they not so agree, let the suit go on its ordinary course, as my only wish is to know the truth, and have justice done. Whatever sums may result from the suit, shall be distributed as is provided in a memorandum in the hands of my secretary, Melchor de Mojica; and the same shall be done with the sums received from the suit now pending with Francisco de Arteaga Martinez.

LIV. Item: I direct that thirty thousand *maravedis* be given as a marriage portion to a girl who is, and has been since childhood, a servant in my household and who is said to be a child of one Francisco Barco, born in Tehuantepec.

LV. Item: I direct that a suit of mourning, such as I have ordered to be given my servants, shall be furnished to Juan de Quintanilla, who came from Valladolid to this city of Seville to assist and treat me during my illness, and is present at my death. In addition, I leave him in recognition of his services fifty *ducats* in gold from my estate.

LVI. Item: I direct that, besides paying what is owing

to my page, Pedro de Astorga, he shall be given from my estate thirty *ducats* in gold, which I leave him in recognition of his services, during my illness; and, in consideration of this, I charge and direct my son and successor, the said Don Martin, to retain him in his household and service in the position I now have him.

LVII. Item: I charge and direct the said Don Martin my son and successor, to retain in his household and service, my valet Antonio Galvarro, as I have him, feeling confident that he will prove a good and loyal servant to him, as he has been during the time he has served me.

LVIII. Item: I direct that Diego Gonzalez, citizen of Medellin, at present living in Seville, shall receive a robe and a cloak of black cloth, some stockings, a doublet, and a cap; besides this twenty *ducats* in gold, all of which I leave him because of the devotion he has shown, and does show, to my family.

LXIX. Item: I charge and direct the said Don Martin, my son and successor, to always retain my accountant Melchor de Mojica in his service, for as he has so well and faithfully served me during the short time he has been here in my household, that I am confident he will henceforward give good service and counsel to my son Don Martin in the affairs and matters which he has handled with me. I charge and direct the said Melchor de Mojica to do this, for I place this confidence in him, and I wish and direct that he continue to hold the charge and position he does at present, for such time as he can, and the marques may desire.

LX. Item: I direct that the hospital of Amor de Dios be paid the alms which the accounts of Don Juan Galiano may show are owing, as I have done each month since I have been in Seville; besides which I order one hundred *ducats* in gold to be paid from my estate.

XLI. Item: I direct that the accounts of Master Vicente (for works executed in my house and room) be inspected, and paid, after deducting such sums as he has already received.

LXII. For as much as Don Martin Cortes, my son and my wife's, the said Marquesa Doña Juana de Zuñiga, who is my successor, is less than twenty-five years old, and more

than fifteen, I desire, and it is my will, that he remain under control of the guardianship and care of such tutors and administrators as I herein name for my children, until they attain the age of twenty-five years completed. During the interim, let him not withdraw from or evade the guardianship and control, so that, until he complete the said age, as I have herein established, his property and estate may be the more advantageously increased, and administered, and all that I direct and dispose by this testament may be the better and more quickly complied with. Thus from the direction and administration of the properties of my son, the said Don Martin, as well as for the control and care of the persons and goods of my legitimate daughters, Doña Maria, Doña Catalina, and Doña Juana, I name and appoint for tutors and guardians, the most illustrious gentlemen, Don Juan Alonso de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia; Don Pedro Alvare Osorio, Marques de Astorga; and Don Pedro de Arellano, Count de Aguilar. I entreat the same to graciously accept the said tutelage and guardianship, and, in accepting and receiving it, they may remember and respect what I beg and entreat them, for these my said children are of their blood and lineage, by protecting whom they do but fufill their duty as gentlemen, and profit their own lineage and quality. In recognition of their services and of their rights conformably to the law to be recompensed from my estate for the said tutelage and guardianship, I direct that, for each year during which their lordships exercise their functions, they shall receive fifty *marks* of silver, which I entreat them to agree to, and to accept in consideration of the causes and reasons above mentioned. I direct that my son and successor, the said Don Martin, shall, until he has completed his twenty-fifth year, receive twelve thousand *ducats* yearly for his support, and that of his servants. The remainder of my income may thus more fully and quickly provide for all that I have ordered and directed in this my testament. As the towns, properties, engineering works, mines, and other works belonging to my estate, to which, after my death, the said Don Martin, my son, will succeed, are divided and scattered through different provinces of New Spain, distant one from another, it is necessary that I, as one who knows

by experience what is necessary, should indicate persons capable of carrying on the administration. Hence I beg and entreat the said gentlemen, tutors, and guardians to approve the appointments and selections of persons which I shall leave, drawn up and signed with my name; for I am positive that the said *haciendas* will be directed and administered to the best advantage, and their lordships relieved of the labour and responsibility of selecting persons for this purpose.

LXIII. Moreover, I leave and name as my successor over my household and estate, Don Martin Cortes, my son by the Marquesa Dona Juaña de Zuñiga my wife, and after him his descendants and other persons named in the institution of my entail, which I institute by the authority of the emperor and king our Lord, according to, and by the form, and with the conditions, and all else contained in the said act of institution. Further, if it be necessary, I do now renew the institution of the said entail in the said Don Martin, my son, in the manner above set forth, and by the said authority and licence which I possess, and I leave as my universal heir the said Don Martin, my son, successor to all my properties, goods, landed estates, and rights, and whatever else I may possess outside the said entail; and I leave as my heirs the above mentioned Doña Maria, Doña Catalina, and Doña Juana, my legitimate daughters by the said marquesa my wife, for what I leave them as their rightful dowries, ordering that they content themselves therewith, without pretending to other rights or claims of any sort against my estate, on the ground of their legitimacy.

LXIV. To cover all expenses of this my testament, and to fulfil its provisions, I name and appoint as my executors in Spain the most illustrious lords, Duke of Medina Sidonia, Marques de Astorga, and Count de Aguilar, to all three of whom jointly, and to each singly, I give full powers to use by their authority whatever sums from my estate are required to provide for, and carry into effect, all the provisions of this my testament. And, for all that touches the administration in New Spain and those provinces, I name and appoint as my executors, the Marquesa Doña Juana de Zuñiga, my wife, and the lord bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumarraga, and

Father Domingo de Betanzos, of the Order of St. Dominic, and the licenciate Juan de Altamirano, all at this present time in New Spain. And, I revoke every and all other testaments which I may have made and delivered, and I desire, and it is my will, that none be executed other than this present writing; likewise I revoke whatsoever codicil or codicils I may have made and delivered either in writing or by word of mouth in the past. And this being seen and read in my presence with all that it contains, I sign it with my name, by my hand on each of its pages which are in all ten, all of which signatures I have written in the presence of the licenciate Infante.

Done at Seville on the eleventh day of the month of October, the year from the birth of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, one thousand five hundred and forty seven.

Item: I say that, as, in one article of this my will, I have disposed and ordered that the four thousand *ducats*, from the rent of the shops and buildings which I have in Mexico, should, after the works on the said hospital, monastery, and college I have ordered founded be entirely devoted to the endowment, and property of the said college, monastery, and hospital to which I refer, should it at any time happen that the said shops and buildings should produce less than this sum of four thousand *ducats*, and my will and intention be defeated, I order that in such a year of shortage, my successor shall complete the amount from his estate, so that the said four thousand *ducats* may be paid in full without any diminution. This page is added to the other ten, done and signed on the same date. The Marques del Valle. Witness by his lordship's command, the licenciate Infante.

By his lordship's command,

MELCHOR MOJICA.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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CONCERNING the importance of the Five Letters of Relation of Hernando Cortes, which are now published altogether in an English translation for the first time, it may be permitted to quote a passage from the historian Dr. Robertson, whose part in the discovery of the first and fifth letters, here presented, was such as to give singular interest and value to his opinion.

"Our knowledge of the events which happened in the conquest of New Spain is derived from sources of information more original and more authentic than that of any transaction in the history of America.

"The letters of Cortes to the Emperor Charles V. are an historical monument, not only first in order of time, but of the greatest authenticity and value."

Dr. Robertson's appreciation was shared by his contemporaries, and has been confirmed by subsequent historians, who have drawn from the letters, as from an original source, many of their important facts, have appealed to them for confirmation of information procured from other sources, and have used them as a very touchstone of truth, in accepting or rejecting statements made by other early writers, even when these latter were eye-witnesses of the events they described.

From the beginning, Cortes adopted the plan of reporting faithfully and minutely to the Emperor, each incident, its causes and its consequences, and of recording his impressions of all that he saw in his strange surroundings, with the purpose of putting before his sovereign an accurate and complete picture of the momentous events then unrolling in the New World; and he has done this with perfect frankness and great simplicity, in letters which are minute but not wearisome,

nor wanting in a certain literary excellence. His correspondence was voluminous, but, amongst all the others, both for the importance of the events recorded, as well as for their volume, the five letters or "relations" (*Relaciones*) as they are called, in which he recounts all that happened from the date of his sailing from Cuba in 1519, till his return from the expedition into Yucatan in 1526, are those which the English historian justly described as "an historical monument of the greatest authenticity and value."

The first of these letters has never been found, and by some is believed, perhaps to have been either the one suppressed by the Council for the Indies at the instance of Panfilo de Narvaez, or the one taken by Juan de Florez from Alonzo de Avila, and thus prevented from reaching the Emperor. It bore the date of July 10, 1519, and left Vera Cruz on the 16th of that month with the two envoys, Alonzo Hernandez Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo. This letter was in duplicate, as was likewise the letter of the magistrates of the newly founded colony, which was shown to Cortes before it was sent. Bernal Diaz del Castello, who was one of the signers of the joint letter, says that Cortes had omitted from his own letter the account of the expeditions of Francesco Hernandez de Cordoba, and of Juan de Grijalba. The letter of Cortes and that of the magistrates confirmed one another, as they were intended to do, and, according to Bernal Diaz, that of the magistrates was the more detailed of the two; hence it is, historically, the more valuable. The only important events which had happened up to that date were the change in the character and objects of the expedition, and the founding of Vera Cruz, and on these points Cortes and the magistrates were in perfect accord.

The search for this missing letter having been given up in despair, it remained for the perspicacity of Dr. Robertson to divine, that, as the Emperor was about leaving Spain for Germany at the time the envoys from Vera Cruz arrived with the letters, they might still be found in some of the Imperial archives, and he accordingly undertook a search, for which all necessary facilities were obtained by the British Ambassador in Vienna. This was crowned with a dual success, in

that a certified copy by a notary public of the letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz was discovered and, at the same time, the Fifth Letter of the *Relaciones* was also unearthed.

The letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz supplies the place of the still missing First Letter of Cortes and serves to complete the series of five *Relaciones*. It was first published in the *Coleccion de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España* of Navarrete, Salvá y Baranda, in 1844. Señor Alaman reproduced it in the first volume of his *Disertaciones sobre la Historia de la Republica Mexicana.*

The Second Letter was dated from Segura de la Frontera, October 30, 1520. It contained the first account ever written of the wonders of Mexico and the adventures of the Spanish conquerors in the newly discovered countries, and awakened the liveliest interest in Spain, where it was first published by Juan Cronberger, a celebrated German printer in Seville, November 8, 1522. It was again printed the following year by another German, George Coci, in Saragossa.

The Third Letter was dated from Coyohuacan, May 15, 1522, and was likewise first printed in Seville by the same Juan Cronberger, March 30, 1523.

The Fourth Letter was dated from the city of Temixtitan (Mexico), October 15, 1524, and was first published in Toledo by Gaspar de Avila, and again in Saragossa, July 8, 1526.

All of these editions are folios in gothic lettering and are now extremely rare.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Letters, which were the only ones known until Dr. Robertson's fortunate discovery completed the series, have been translated into Latin, French, Italian, English, and German, at various times.

Of the Second and Third Letters a Latin translation made by Pietro Savorgnani of Forlì, secretary to the bishop of Vienne (Dauphiné), was dedicated to Pope Clement VII. and first published in Nuremberg in 1524. This translation was reproduced in the work entitled: *De Insulis nuper inventis*, which first appeared at Cologne in 1532 and was afterwards included in the *Novus Orbis* of Simon Grineo, of which one

edition was issued at Basle in 1555 and another at Rotterdam in 1616.

Nicholas Liburno (or Liburnio) translated the Latin text of Savorgnani into Italian, publishing his work in Venice in 1524. This Italian translation was again published by Ramusio in the third volume of his work, *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi*, in Venice (edition of 1606).

A German translation of two of the letters was made by Xysto Betuleio and Andrea Diethero and published in Augsburg in 1550. (Garcia Icazbalceta, *Documentos*, vol. i., p. xxxvi.)

Another German edition was published in Heidelberg in 1779.

The first Spanish edition of the Second, Third, and Fourth Letters was published by Andrés Gonzalez de Barcia in the first volume of his work entitled *Historiadores Primitivos de las Indias Occidentales*, Madrid, 1749.

In 1770, Archbishop Lorenzana of Mexico, afterwards Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, published the Second, Third, and Fourth Letters, together with other documents and his commentaries, under the title of *Historia de Nueva España*, and of this work an indifferent second edition was issued in New York by Manuel del Mar in 1828.

Mr. George Folsom, secretary of the New York Historical Society, translated Archbishop Lorenzana's text into English in 1843.

The Vicomte de Flavigni dedicated to the Marquise de Polignac a very free translation of the three letters then known, in a book published in Paris about 1778 (there is no date given), entitled *Correspondance de Fernand Cortes avec l'Empereur Charles V. sur la conquêt du Mexique:* reprinted in Switzerland, 1779. Such liberties were taken with the Spanish text that Mr. Folsom, in his notice of this work, rightly calls it rather a paraphrase than a translation.

The Fifth Letter, which was discovered in Codex CXX. of the Imperial Library in Vienna, has no date, but a codex of the sixteenth century in the National Library in the City of Mexico bears the following: *De la cibdad de Temixtitan desta Nueva España, à 3 del mes de Setiembre, año del nascimiento de nuestro Señor é Salvador Jesucristo de* 1526.

Three editions of the complete series of five *Relaciones* have been published in Spanish: one is found in the first volume of *Historiadores Primitivos de Indias* of Don Enrique de Vedia, which is contained in Rivadeneyra's *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Madrid, 1877; another appears in the first volume of the *Biblioteca Historica de la Iberia*, and the third is the admirable collection of the learned Don Pascual Gayangos of the Spanish Academy, *Cartas y Relaciones de Hernan Cortés al Emperador Carlos V.*, published in Paris in 1866. The same author made an English translation of the Fifth Letter, which appeared in a single volume of the Hakluyt Society's publications in 1868.

A French translation of the five letters was published by Desiré Charnay in Paris in 1896 under the title of *Lettres de Fernand Cortes à Charles Quint.*

In preparing this present edition, a careful comparison has been made of the various texts known, and, while idiomatic differences have imposed certain rearrangements of form, particularly in the matter of punctuation, and the suppression of many cumbersome repetitions, it has been sought to leave to the letters their unique characteristics, due to the personality of their author, and to the temper of their times.

The Spanish language was not yet the strong and stately vehicle of thought into which it was afterward shaped by generations of scholars, whose writings not only brought the Castilian tongue to a superlative degree of purity and perfection, but also conspicuously enriched the universal patrimony of literature. Fernando Cortes had but scanty learning, and the conditions under which he wrote were little conducive to the cultivation of literary style, but the absence of adornment, the precision of fact, and forceful terseness of expression furnish his compositions with singular merit. The restraint and self-control of which he was master appear in the equal and passionless style of his writings; for he seems neither exalted by success nor cast down by misfortunes, both of which he describes with calm simplicity in language which is both natural and fluent. Perhaps nowhere does the real superiority and inherent strength of his character more plainly appear

than in those passages where he writes of the intrigues and detractions of his enemies, men whose ambitions were selfish and whose characters were vulgar and unscrupulous. Judged by his letters alone, Cortes must be ranked high amongst the Spanish-American discoverers and conquerors. His rudely honest contemporary and faithful follower Bernal Diaz del Castillo resented—and perhaps not unnaturally—the scanty mention of the other officers and men of the expedition, and, occasionally, in the course of his gossipy chronicle, he breaks into acrimony over what seems to him a cheating of others of their dues.

On the whole, however, Cortes was wise to eschew personalities in his reports, for no distribution of praise would have satisfied his followers, and he would have merely risked wearying the Emperor with a useless repetition of meaningless names. Cortes cannot be fairly reproached with self-laudation; he evidently knew the value also of occasional self-effacement, and he never loses sight of the high dual mission with which he felt himself invested,—the spreading of the Faith and the extension of the Spanish sovereignty; while the glory of victory is invariably ascribed to divine protection or the intervention of the saints, rather than to his own courage or ability, and the fruits of his victories were laid at the feet of his sovereign.

The notes with which the present edition is supplied have been carefully compiled from the best authorities, ancient and modern. Among these authorities, the soldier chroniclers contemporary with Cortes, and the Spanish priests in America at the same early period, take the first rank, and some brief notice of the character of these men, the circumstances under which, and the motives for which, they wrote may be of service in enabling the reader to estimate their testimony at its just historical worth.

It should always, however, be borne in mind that the letters of Cortes have the unique and superlative merit of having been composed on the spot from day to day, in the midst of the events in which their writer was playing the chief part, and that they were destined for the Emperor alone, hence misstatements of fact could only result from an inten-

tion to deceive the Sovereign. The astuteness of Cortes would seem to exclude the adoption of a short-sighted policy, which would have foredoomed him to exposure and failure, and, though the story of his dealings with Diego Velasquez, Panfilo de Narvaez, and the other Spanish officials with whom he came in conflict, is told from his own point of view, the version he gives cannot be essentially untrue in any important particular. His story of the conquest from 1519 till 1527 is thus told almost in the form of a diary, written at different times and places, under varying circumstances of fortune, and as it was written, so do we now read it.

The other conquerors, and the priests, wrote or supplied material to others several years after the events they chronicled, and under the influence of different motives, either avowed or dissembled. These latter on some points give to their histories the bias of special pleading, besides which, in many instances, their manuscripts reached responsible hands only after many vicissitudes, and, at times, only in copies or translations, which may suggest reasonable doubts of their entire authenticity. Whenever, therefore, a conflict of testimony is found concerning any event described by Cortes, modern historians have almost invariably decided that his statements, on all points of which he had personal knowledge, should be held to outweigh those of other writers unless it conclusively appears that his conscious intention was to mislead the Emperor.

The death of Montezuma is one of the few cases in which it seems the decision should be against Cortes. With great and perfect frankness he admits the murder of Quauhpopoca, the torture and subsequent murder of Quauhtemoczin, and he owns to a somewhat extensive catalogue of indefensible crimes, but for Montezuma's death he refuses responsibility. Yet, whether we consider the unanimous testimony as to the trifling character of the Emperor's wound, the useless embarrassment his presence had become, the imprudence of leaving him free in the capital, or the impossibility of carrying him captive out of it, and finally the contemporary Mexican versions of his death, all the circumstances certainly point to the conclusion that the royal captive died by the will of his conqueror.

(1)

FRANCISCO LOPEZ DE GOMARA

The Historia General de las Indias and the *Cronica de la Conquista de Nueva-España*, which were published in Saragossa, 1552, were at first received with the greatest favour by the public, and other editions as well as translations into Italian and French rapidly followed. This success, however, was short-lived, as Gomara's facts and appreciations were promptly impugned, first by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who, in publishing his book, called it *The True History of the Conquest*, in contradistinction to Gomara's false and fanciful one.

In 1553 the Spanish Government took steps to suppress the work, and withdraw it from circulation, imposing a fine of 200,000 *maravedis* upon any one who should print or sell it in the future. This rigid prohibition was not revoked until 1727. Concerning Gomara's birth and antecedents, nothing is known, and, likewise, neither the date nor place of his death is recorded: "He came like water and like wind he went." He is said to have held the Chair of Rhetoric at the University of Alcala, and afterwards to have passed several years in Rome. In 1540 he entered the service of Fernando Cortes, then Marques del Valle, and recently returned to Spain. Dr. Robertson surmises that he then began his historical work, under the inspiration, if not at the dictation, of his patron, and this would seem to be likely. He is undoubtedly the apologist of Cortes, and, although the latter was dead some years when the work was published, the first part is dedicated to the Emperor, and the second to Don Martin Cortes, second Marques del Valle.

But, all reservations admitted, the work of Gomara illustrates a most important and interesting period of history, and, if he was constrained to treat his hero leniently, he nevertheless had access to a mass of original information, by which he profited with excellent results. His style is agreeable and scholarly, revealing a writer of wide culture, gifted with unusual knowledge of astronomy, geography, and history. Although he never was in America (as far as is

recorded), he has known how to lend the realism to his descriptions which usually only an eyewitness can impart. When not vindicating Cortes, Gomara has every claim to be ranked amongst the most trustworthy of the early writers on Spanish-American events, and his facts and descriptions generally stand the test of comparison with authentic temporary records.

(2)

BERNAL DIAZ DEL CASTILLO

Bernal Diaz was a perfect type of the military adventurer of his age, and first went as a private soldier to America in 1514, under the command of Pedrarias de Avila, bound for Darien. He next appeared in Cuba, where he was always ready to join any expedition of adventure which might be organised, and, indeed, he went on most of them, and was one of the few who escaped from the disastrous exploration conducted by Ponce de Leon on the Florida coast. He next joined Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba on his journey to Yucatan. He returned again thither the following year with Juan de Grijalba, from whose expedition he arrived once more at Cuba just in time to take service under Fernando Cortes. Diaz was a brave soldier, popular amongst his comrades, and esteemed by his commander, who some years later (in 1540), recommended him to the notice of the Emperor, as did likewise the Viceroy Don Antonio Mendoza.

After the conquest, he received an *encomienda* in Guatemala, where he held the office of *regidor* of Santiago de los Caballeros, where presumably he died. And this would have been all there was to say about Bernal Diaz, had Francisco Lopez de Gomara not published his history of the conquest in 1552. His exaltation of Cortes, to the exclusion of other members of the expedition, enraged the old soldier, living in peaceful retirement on his estate at Chamula, and he resolved that he and his fellows, who had borne the burden of the conquest, should likewise make good their just claims to a share of the credit. It was a case of "mine enemy writing a book," and the old veteran slashes his cultivated rival's polished prose in the language of the camp. Thirty years

had then elapsed since the fall of the Aztec Empire, and Bernal Diaz was no longer a young man; nowhere does he say that he had taken notes or memoranda of what happened from day to day, and yet, were his chronicle a journal, its details could hardly be more minute, nor its statements more emphatic. These were the great events of his life, worthy indeed to be the great events of a greater man's life, and doubtless he relived and rehearsed them constantly, and, being a man of quick and careful observation, given to pondering and reflecting upon all that he saw and heard, gifted moreover with a good memory, it is not so strange that in the quiet of his last years the retired soldier could evoke the procession of events in their perfect order.

He began writing in 1558, and his declared purpose was to correct the mistakes and misstatements of Gomara, and to show that not only had those under Cortes's control shared in the fighting, but had likewise been called into the counsels of their chief. His indubitable claim upon Mexico's perpetual gratitude is in his introduction of the orange-tree as, when on Grijalba's expedition, he landed one day, and planted eight orange seeds, which he brought from Cuba, all of which grew. The Indians, seeing the strange little plants coming up, carefully protected them from insects and other perils, and from this casual little plantation the culture of the orange-tree spread over all *tierra caliente*.

The father of Bernal Diaz was Francisco Diaz del Castillo y Gaban, and his mother was Maria Diez Rejon; as the former held the post of *regidor* of the important town of Medina del Campo, he must have been a man of some family.

The *Verdedera Historia*, as we have it, is incomplete, and was printed not from the original, nor even from a certified duplicate of it, but from a copy in possession of the councillor Ramirez de Prado. The work was undertaken by F. Remon, who died before its conclusion, so that it was passed on to Fray Gabriel Adarzo de Santander, afterwards Bishop of Otranto.

As literature, the work of Bernal Diaz ranks far below the letters of Cortes, and shows the writer to be without instruction or culture. The narrative is involved, the mass of small

details bewildering, while through all pierces the jealous determination of a wounded vanity to assert its claims to recognition. The stamp of perfect sincerity and frankness, however, is upon the whole work, and its value as an historical document, particularly when paralleled with the letters of Cortes, and the chronicles of Gomara, is superlative and unimpeachable.

Prescott describes Bernal Diaz as of "a poor and humble family," but since his father held the office of *regidor* this can hardly be exact, as such posts, especially in a town of the importance of Medina del Campo, were not held by the poor and humble. He himself claimed some kinship with Don Diego Velasquez.

(3)

GONZALO FERNANDEZ DE OVIEDO Y VALDÉS

Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo was born of an illustrious family in Asturias in 1478, and passed his early years at Court as page to the Infante Don Juan, only son of the Catholic Sovereigns. He spent some years in Italy in the service of the King of Naples, but returned to Castile, where he became custodian of the crown jewels, until he was sent as royal inspector of the gold smelting in the Indies. After taking part in Pedrarias de Avila's colonising expedition to Darien, he returned and settled permanently in San Domingo.

Oviedo kept in touch with the Spanish Court and returned several times to Spain, on one of which occasions, in 1526, he published his *Sumario*, which was dedicated to the Emperor, and dealt with the geography, climate, vegetation, animals, and tribes of the American Colonies, and which met with a popular reception from the public. The first volume of his great work, however, *Historia General de las Indias*, in nineteen books, to which he had given years of careful labour, appeared in 1535. The entire work is divided into three parts, consisting in all of fifty books, and includes everything that had already appeared in his *Sumario*. The second and third parts are occupied with the conquest of Mexico, Peru, and other South American countries. Oviedo, through his

relations with most of the great personages of his day and his personal knowledge of the countries he describes, the events he portrays, and the men who figured in them, collected an enormous mass of data, which, however, he never properly classified. He is, therefore, confused and confusing, self-contradictory and something of a plagiarist, of whom it was said that, not content with drawing his information from the higher and more trustworthy sources, he did not scruple to collect the gossip of the camp from common soldiers, and the *cancans* of great mens' ante-chambers. Las Casas describes his work as "a wholesale fabrication, and as full of lies as pages." Oviedo and Las Casas were poles asunder, and the good bishop was so averse to the sentiments and opinions of his contemporary (so contrary to his own) that he could see no good either in him or his work.

Despite the blemishes which mar his work, Oviedo must be considered an astute observer, nor can it be thought that he consciously or intentionally misstated facts. From the same events, two different observers draw opposite conclusions, and, in the study of historical records, their value may be more accurately estimated by considering the character of the medium through which they reach us.

Oviedo died at Valladolid in 1559, while on a visit to Spain to prepare for the publication of the remainder of his work.

(4)

BERNARDINO DE SAHAGUN

The *Historia Universal de Nueva España* of Fray Bernardino de Sahagun serves as a most valuable text-book for all students of Mexican antiquities.

The author was born at Sahagun, and entered the Franciscan Order in Salamanca, where he studied at the University. He went to Mexico in 1529, where he devoted his energies to the conversion of the Indians. He entered upon this task on the basis that, to convert the natives to Christianity, it was first necessary to know them, to understand their language, beliefs, and traditions, and, most of all, to be thoroughly versed

in their ancient mythology, theology, and ritual. To acquire such knowledge, he lived among the natives of Texcoco for several years, and mastered their language and their hieroglyphic writings to such an extent that his own work was originally written in the Mexican tongue.

His superiors did not give unqualified approval to the publication of his MSS., the tendency being rather to obliterate as far as possible all knowledge of ancient Aztec beliefs, with a view to detaching the Indians entirely from the traditions of their ancestors. Starting thus with a *tabula rasa* as it were, it was thought that the work of conversion would progress more rapidly. Fortunately this mistaken conception did not lead to the destruction of the mass of unique information which Fray Bernardino had accumulated, although his manuscripts were widely scattered through various convents of the Order.

Sahagun sent a statement of the nature and extent of his labours to Spain, where it attracted the attention of the President of the Royal Council for the Indies, at that time Don Juan de Ovando, who fortunately perceived its value, and caused the scattered manuscripts to be collected and restored to their owner, at the same time directing that he should return to Spain, and forthwith translate them into Spanish. Sahagun was nearly eighty years of age at this time, but he set diligently to work, and completed the translation, which was placed side by side with the original, and the whole illustrated with an Aztec vocabulary. The entire work, contained in two large folio volumes, was sent to Madrid, from which time it completely disappeared, not to be seen again for more than two hundred years, when the cosmographer Don Juan Bautista Muñoz unearthed it in the Franciscan Library at Tolosa in Navarre.

The first publication, dedicated to Pope Pius VIII. and edited by Carlos Maria de Bustamente, deputy for the state of Oaxaca, appeared in Mexico at the cost of the national treasury. One year later Lord Kingsborough introduced it into the 6th volume of his magnificent work, under the natural impression that he was giving it for the first time to the public.

(5)

BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, who later became Bishop of Chiapa, was born at Seville in 1474. His father went with Columbus on his second voyage in 1493, and amassed sufficient means to provide his promising son with a university education at Salamanca. He was the first priest ordained in the new world, where he went with Ovando in 1502. The sufferings of the natives under the cruelties of the first colonists, and especially the system of *ripartimientos* and *encomiendas*, so aroused the sympathies of the young priest that he dedicated his life to their defence, and was the first to bear the glorious title of Protector-General of the Indians, which Cardinal Ximenez de Cisneros, regent in the absence of Charles V., conferred upon him. He was indefatigable in his crusade and not always discreet. After the failure of the native colony entrusted to him, he retired to a Dominican convent (which Order he entered) and devoted himself during many years to various compositions in vindication of the Indians and their violated rights. He enlisted his brethren of the Order in his apostolate, and never during his long and eventful life flagged in his zeal for the noble end he had set himself. After refusing the bishopric of Cuzco, the richest perhaps in the New World, he later accepted the poor diocese of Chiapa. He died in July, 1566, at the age of ninety-two, in the monastery of Atocha, at Madrid.

Las Casas barely tolerated Cortes, and, having known him as an obscure young man of no importance, courting the favour of Diego Velasquez in Cuba, he could never refrain in later years, when extraordinary fortune had elevated him at his former patron's expense, from recalling the humble origin and many doubtful transactions of the great Conqueror's youth. Indeed he treats Cortes throughout as a mere lucky adventurer. Prescott says of him that he had the virtues and faults of a reformer, being inspired by a great and glorious idea which "urged him to lift the voice of rebuke in the presence of princes, to brave the menaces of an infuriated populace, to cross seas, traverse mountains and

deserts, to incur the alienation of friends, the hostility of enemies, to endure obloquy, insult, and persecution."

His great work, *Historia General de las Indias*, to which he devoted himself during thirty years, while still in manuscript, was largely drawn upon by different writers, notably by Herrera, who incorporated a large amount into his own work published in 1601. An edition of his works was published in five volumes at Madrid in 1876. His *Brevisima Relacion*, widely read and translated into foreign languages, was a terrible indictment of his countrymen and their dealings with the natives. The integrity of his character, the purity of his motives, and his apostolic virtues command admiration, and, though his intemperate zeal in the cause he championed troubled the serenity of his appreciations as an historian, his statement of facts may be invariably trusted, and his record of contemporary events is of unquestionable value.

(6)

MOTOLINIA

Toribio de Benevente is best known by his Indian name (which he himself adopted) of *Motolinia*, meaning the "poor man" (equivalent of the *Poverello* which was St. Francis's dearest title). He was one of twelve Franciscans who first came to Mexico in response to the request of Cortes, at the close of the conquest (1523). He travelled from Mexico to Guatemala and Nicaragua on foot, and knew the country and its peoples as did few. His headquarters were at a convent at Texcoco, where his life and energies were devoted with success to teaching and converting the Mexicans. His *Historia de los Indias de Nueva España* embraces first religion and rites of the Aztecs, second conversion, third their character, chronology, astrology, and some account of their principal cities, etc. His MS. was printed in the first volume of Icazbalceta's *Documentos Ineditos*.

(7)

PETER MARTYR

Pietro Martire de Angleria of Arona, Italy, came to Spain

in 1487. He wrote in Latin *De Orbe Novo*, printed in a complete edition by Hakluyt, Paris, 1587. He took great interest in the discoveries and colonisation, and was allowed to attend meetings of the Royal Council for the Indies. He was personally acquainted with Columbus, Cortes, and others, and their correspondence with the Court was open to him. His writings are those of a philosophical observer of historical events, unencumbered with the manifold details and small incidents which crowd and confuse the pages of the soldier chroniclers such as Bernal Diaz. He died in 1525.

(8)

ANTONIO DE HERRERA

Antonio de Herrera was born at Cuellar in 1549, and was made Historiographer of the Indies from 1492–1554. His *Historia General de las Indias Occidentales* is divided into eight decades, of which the first four were published in 1601, the others in 1615, five volumes in folio. A very free English translation, with omissions, was made by Stevens. The plan of this work is confused and interrupted, wanting in sequence, and filled with irrelevant details. He had access to all the Statepapers, colonial reports, and every MS. relating to the discovery, conquest, and colonisation of the New World, and he quoted very freely from Las Casas. Dazzled by the wonderful events of the times and the equally marvellous achievements of his countrymen, he was blind to their faults and excesses, so that, while not exactly a panegyric, his work is coloured by a strong patriotism, which shows in his optimistic appreciation of the character and deeds of the conquerors. His work is, however, a compendium of authentic information which cannot be too highly esteemed. He died in 1625.

(9)

JUAN DE TORQUEMADA

Juan de Torquemada, Provincial of the Franciscans in Mexico from 1614–1617, spent more than fifty years of his

life in the country, during which time he amassed an immense collection of ancient pictures, writings, and original manuscripts, besides the information, often legendary and contradictory, which he obtained from the Indians. Of his *Monarchia Indiana* Clavigero says that one must seek jewels among the rubbish. It was first published in Madrid in 1614, and again in 1724.

(10)

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

The work of the eminent American historian William H. Prescott is too well known to require extensive notice here. His diligence in research, and his scholarly familiarity with the sources of Spanish-American history, contributed to make his *Conquest of Mexico* a masterpiece of historical narrative, in which sober facts seem almost to catch the glamour of romance from the delightful style of their presentation, and this work will doubtless long remain the most complete, as it is the most fascinating, account in our language of the stirring events it describes.

(11)

MANUEL OROZCO Y BERRA

In 1880, the *Historia Antiqua de la Conquista de Mexico*, by Don Manuel Orozco y Berra, Vice-President of the Society of Geography and Statistics, was published by the order and at the expense of the Mexican Government, Don Porfirio Diaz being then President, and Señor Mariscal Minister of Public Instruction. This erudite work, the fruit of a lifetime of discriminating research by the distinguished author, is divided into four parts: I. Civilisation, II. Prehistoric Man in Mexico, III. Ancient History, IV. The Conquest.

(12)

MANUEL GARCIA ICAZBALCETA

The collection of documents, for the most part inedited, published in 1858 by Don Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, opens

many original and invaluable historical sources to all. The labours of this learned Mexican in the field of historical research are beyond all praise.

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FIRST LETTER

FIRST LETTER

Sent to the Queen Doña Juana, and the Emperor Charles V., her son, by the Judiciary and Municipal Authorities of the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, dated the 10th July 1519.

Very High and Very Powerful and Excellent Princes, Very Catholic and Very Great Sovereigns and Rulers. We believe that Your Majesties by a letter from Diego Velasquez,[1] Lieutenant of the Admiral[2] in the Island of Fernandina,[3] will have been informed of the new land, which

[1] He was a native of Cuellar, and accompanied Columbus on his second voyage in 1493; under commission of Diego Columbus, then viceroy, he effected the conquest of Cuba, and became governor of the island. He showed himself ungrateful to his benefactor, Diego Columbus, and he was in his turn betrayed, and finally outgeneralled, by Cortes. When the royal appointment of the latter, as Captain-General of New Spain, was proclaimed in Cuba by Rodrigo de Paz, and Francisco de las Casas, to the sound of trumpets in 1522, Diego Velasquez took to his bed from sheer mortification, and died within a few months. Fuller notice of his character, and his dealings with Cortes, are given in the preceding Biographical Note.

[2] Diego Columbus, only son of the Admiral Christopher Columbus and his wife Felipa Mogniz Perestrello of Lisbon, succeeded Don Nicolas de Ovando as governor, and bore the title of viceroy.

[3] Cuba, which was discovered by Columbus, on October 28, 1492, and named by him, Juana, in honour of the Royal Infante, Don Juan. He was convinced that he had reached China, or Cipango, of which he had read in Marco Polo's narrative. It was discovered to be an island by Ocampo, who first circumnavigated it in 1508. The island was conquered in 1511 by Velasquez, in command of three hundred men, but so peaceable and indolent were the natives, that the conquest was effected almost without a struggle; for only one chief, Hatuey, with a few followers, attempted to dispute the landing of the Spaniards. Hatuey was captured, and sentenced to be burned. When this cruel sentence was about to be carried out, a friar exhorted him to be baptised, and thus ensure his soul going to paradise. The chief asked if there would be Spaniards there, and when the friar

was discovered in these parts about two years ago, which in the beginning was called Cozumel,[1] and has since been named Yucatan,[2] without its being the one or the other. This your Royal Highnesses will be able to perceive from our narration because, until now the accounts, which have been made to Your Majesties concerning this country, both of its customs and wealth, as well as concerning the manner of its discovery, and other things which have been stated about it, are not and could not have been exact, for, as will appear from this account which we send to Your Highnesses, up till now no one has known them.

We will deal with it here from the beginning of its

answered that they all hoped to go there, he replied that then he would rather not. So he was burned, but not converted. The Indian name Cuba has persisted and survived all others. (Oviedo, *Hist. Gen.*, lib. xxvii., cap. iii.; Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. iii., cap. xxi.–xxv.)

[1] Cozumel, also sometimes called Acuzamil (*Ah-Cuzamil* meaning the "Swallows"), was discovered by Juan de Grijalba on the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, and hence named by him Santa Cruz. He took possession in the name of the Spanish sovereigns, and of Diego Velasquez, under whose commission the expedition had sailed. There was a stone building on the island, having a square tower with a door in each of its four sides. Inside this there were idols, palm branches, and bones, which they said were those of a great chief (Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap ix.). The tower was surmounted by a smaller square turret which was reached by an outside staircase. Grijalba hoisted the Spanish flag on this turret, and named the place San Juan de Puerta Latina. The Chaplain Fray Juan Diaz said mass. Cristobal de Olid, who was sent by Velasquez in search of Grijalba's expedition, about whose safety fears were felt, also landed at Cozumel, and took formal possession, thinking that he was its discoverer (Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. i.). The inhabitants seemed poor, and what gold they produced was mostly an alloy with copper, of little value, which the Indians called *guanin*, and prized highly (Las Casas, lib. 7, cap. lxvii.).

Cozumel was a place of pilgrimage, and in one of the great temples there stood a hollow statue called *Teel-Cuzam* (the Swallows' Feet), made of terra-cotta, in which a priest placed himself to give oracular answers to the pilgrims (Cogolludo, *Hist. de Yucatan*, lib. iv., cap. vii.).

[2] Yucatan, "The land of wounds and calamities," as Bernal Diaz called it. This coast was first sighted by Columbus, but he did not land. In 1511, a boat-load of men from the wreck of Valdivia's caravel

discovery up to its present state, so that Your Majesties will know the country as it really is, the people who possess it, and the manner of their life, and the rites and ceremonies, the sect or law they obey, and the profit which Your Royal Highnesses may derive from it; and may also know who have here rendered services to Your Majesties, in order that Your Royal Highnesses may act as best suits your service. The most faithful and exact account is as follows:

Expedition of Fernandez de Cordoba

It may be two years, a little more or less, Most Enlightened Princes, that, in the City of Santiago,[1] which is in the Island of Fernandina, of whose towns we have been citizens, three inhabitants of the said Island united, and the one was called Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba,[2] another Lope Ochoa de Caicedo, and the third Cristobal Mor-

drifted onto the coast, and the men were sacrificed, and eaten, all save two, who escaped as will be explained later. The coast was first really discovered by Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, as is here related, and the name of Yucatan was the word *tectetan*, meaning "I don't understand," caught by the Spaniards from the natives, and which they took to be the name of the country (Motolinia, trat iii., cap. viii.). The Indian name was *Ulumil Cuz*, and *Etel Ceh*, meaning the land of birds and game; they also called it *Peten*, an island, though they well knew that it was not one. According to Ordoñez, not only the coast province, but the entire country, was also called *Maya* (a waterless land). The language of all the country was known as the Maya tongue.

The subjoined references will be useful to students of the history of this most interesting country and its stupendous antiquities: Cogolludo, *Hist. de Yucatan*; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique;* Diego de Landa, *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan* (French translation by Brasseur de Bourbourg); Stephens, *Incidents of Travels in Yucatan;* Bancroft, *Native Races;* and Carrillo, *Compendio de la Hist. Yucatan.*

[1] Santiago was the seat of the governor, and the cathedral city of the first bishop.

[2] This expedition was organised by the men who had originally come from Spain with Pedro Arias de Avila, commonly called Pedrarias de Avila, when he was sent in command of an admirably equipped fleet to supersede Balboa as governor of Darien. Among these men was Bernal Diaz del Castillo, whose copious narrative of the events

ante; and, as it is customary in these Islands, which have been peopled by Spaniards in the name of Your Majesties, to bring Indians for their service from the other Islands which have not been peopled by Spaniards, these said persons sent two ships and a brigantine, in order to fetch Indians from those Islands [1] to Fernandina

in the islands, and in Mexico, is one of the most valuable sources of American history.

These men, on their return from Darien, were cordially received in Cuba by Diego Velasquez, who encouraged them to continue explorations. After three years of fruitless delays during which many were ill and some had died, they decided to organise a venture on their own account, and they secured the co-operation of Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, a rich colonist, who was willing to put his money into the undertaking. He was chosen as captain, three vessels were bought, one of which Cortes and others assert, was furnished by Velasquez, on condition that he should be reimbursed for his outlay by slaves, who should be brought back from the islands. Bernal Diaz says that they refused this condition, but that Velasquez furnished the ship just the same; this, however, does not accord with other testimony, and it may well be that Bernal Diaz, who was simply an enlisted soldier-adventurer, knew little of the conditions negotiated amongst the owners and leaders.

The little flotilla put to sea from Santiago on February 8, 1517, stopping first at Puerto del Principe for supplies, and continuing thence under the direction of the pilot Alaminos, who laid the course. After a voyage not free from dangers, they discovered a small island off the peninsula of Yucatan, which they called Isla de las Mugeres (Women's Island), because they found there statues of the goddesses Xchel and Ixchebeliax, and others. From this island an important looking town on the mainland was visible, which they named Grand Cairo. This expedition, as will be seen in succeeding notes, ended badly.

[1] The Spanish settlements in the New World were, at that time, limited to the islands of Hispaniola (Haiti), Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica, which were called the Indies by the discoverers and conquerors, because they were firmly persuaded they had encircled half the globe, and reached the Orient. Besides these four islands, there was the colony of Darien, of which more information will be given later. Popular imagination in Spain was inflamed by the tales of vast wealth in gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, and spices, lying in the virgin lands waiting to be picked up by the first comer. Avaricious adventurers set out to enrich themselves by a lucky venture, and return with their easily and quickly won fortunes to Spain. Serious projects for colonisation were not yet conceived, and, what settlements

to make slaves of them. We believe, although we do not positively know it, that the said Diego Velasquez, Lieutenant of the Admiral, owned a fourth part of the armada. One of the owners of the said armada, called Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, went as its Captain, taking as pilot a resident of the town of Palos,[1] one Anton de Alaminos,[2] whom we have also now as pilot, and whom we have sent to Your Royal Highnesses that he may furnish information to Your Majesties.

Pursuing their voyage, they arrived at the said Island of Yucatan, at its uttermost point, which may be sixty or seventy leagues both from the said Island of Fernandina, and from this country of the rich land of Vera Cruz, [*thus in the MS.* , where we now are in the name of Your Royal Highnesses. At this point they disembarked at a town called Campoche,[3] whose chief they named

Discovery of Yucatan

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there were, had been made by disillusioned immigrants who, when they found that gold and pearls, instead of lying at their feet, had to be sought as elsewhere with labour, enslaved the natives for the exploitation of the natural resources of the islands. Thus the slave trade sprang up, and as the Indians, unaccustomed to hard work and harsh treatment, died off in such numbers as to rapidly depopulate the neighbourhoods of the Spanish settlements, expeditions were constantly organised to the neighbouring islands for the purpose, as Cortes states, of capturing the natives. The system of *repartimientos* and *encomiendas* was begun under the sanction of Columbus, and, in spite of the denunciations of the Church, and repeated edicts from the home government, the slave trade flourished, and the island population rapidly dwindled. This subject is more fully noticed in Appendix I. to the Fourth Letter.

[1] Anton de Alaminos had served under Columbus on his voyage in 1502, when the other pilots were Comacho de Triana, and Juan Alvarez; there was also the inspector of the royal fifth Bernardino de Iñiquez, and a Chaplain, Alonzo Gonzalez from the town of San Cristobal.

[2] The little port from which Columbus originally sailed in 1492.

[3] The point of Catoche, where they landed on March 5th, is the extremity of the peninsula nearest to Cuba. A chief and many people came out to the caravels in canoes, and having no interpreter they made themselves understood as best they could by signs, inviting

Lazaro, and gave two spindles with a piece of cloth of gold; but, as the natives of the country did not allow them to remain in the town, or on land, they left, and went about ten leagues down the coast, where they again landed at a town called Machocobon,[1] whose chief was Champoto. Here they were well received by the natives, though they were not allowed to come into the towns; and that night they slept out of their ships, and on land.

The natives, seeing this, attacked them[2] on the morning of the following day, in such a manner that 26 Spaniards perished, and all the rest were wounded, and at last the Captain Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, seeing this, escaped with those who were left to him by taking refuge in the ships. The said Captain, seeing that more than a quarter of his people had been killed, and that he himself had received 30 odd wounds, and was almost dead, and despairing of escape, returned with the ships and people to the said Island of Fernandina.[3]

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the Spaniards to land, and saying *Conex Cotoche*, which means "come to our houses," but was thought by the Spaniards to be the name of the place. They called it Catoche therefore (Carrillo, *Compendio de la Hist. Yucatan* p. 105). Cortes here confuses Catoche with Campeche (in Maya, *Kimpech*), further westward on the bay of the same name, where the caravels arrived on Sunday, the feast of San Lazaro (March 22nd). Oviedo says that the Spaniards called the chief of the place Lazaro, and that the Indian name for the place was Campeche, but Orozco y Berra states that, in ancient letters, the *place* is called llazaro, and the *river* Campeche (tom. iv., cap. i., note).

[1] There is much confusion amongst the early writers in the spelling of Indian names, and in assigning them correctly. In this case the place was called Poton-Chan, and the bay received the name of Mala Pelea from the Spanish sailors, on account of the disastrous rout they suffered there. The Cacique, Machocobon, according to Gomara, was a very formidable warrior.

[2] See Appendix I. at close of Letter.

[3] Alaminos, after consulting the other pilots, decided to sail for Florida, as being the best way back to Cuba, and because he knew that coast since its discovery by Ponce de Leon. They reached Florida in four days, and, upon landing to get water, they were again attacked. Both Alaminos and Bernal Diaz were wounded, while Berrio, the only soldier who had come unscathed out of the Mala-

Here they made known to Diego Velasquez that they had found a land very rich in gold, because they had seen that all the natives wore it, some in their noses, some in their ears, and some in other parts, and, likewise, that there were in that country edifices built of mortar and stone. They made known to him also many other facts, which they published about the admirable things and riches of the said land, and they counselled him to send ships to barter for gold, saying that, if he would do so, a great amount of it could be obtained.[1]

Return of the Expedition

Upon learning this, the said Diego Velasquez, moved more by cupidity than any other zeal, sent a Procurator to the Island of Hispaniola, with a certain account, which he made to the Reverend Fathers of St. Jerome,[2] who resided there as Governors of the Indies, to obtain per-

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Pelea fight, met the worse fate of being taken alive. After many mishaps, they finally landed at Carenas (*Habana*), and, ten days later, Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba died from his wounds, and thus ended this disastrous expedition (Bernal Diaz, cap. i–vi.; Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. iv.; Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. lii.; Herrera, dec. ii., lib. iii., cap. xvii–xviii.; Cogolludo, *Hist. Yucatan*, lib. i., cap. i–ii.; Torquemada, lib. iv., cap. iii.).

[1] Their description of the solidly built houses and temples, the spoils of gold which they brought, together with the two converted captives, aroused the greatest excitement, and inflamed Diego Velasquez's cupidity. Speculation as to the origin of the natives of Yucatan was rife, and the theory was advanced that they descended from the tribes of Jews exiled from Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus.

[2] Fray Bartolomé Las Casas had succeeded, by the moving picture he drew of the oppression and injustice practised by the Spaniards on the natives of the islands, in interesting the Cardinal-Regent Ximenez de Cisereros in their behalf, and His Eminence's first step was to apply to the General of the Jeronymites at San Bartolomé de Lupiano to furnish some men of that order for service in the Indies. A chapter of the Priors of Castile, which the General assembled, assented to the Cardinal's wish, and furnished three friars who were sent out with instructions, and very full powers. Las Casas says that they did not go as governors, as some supposed, but rather to see that the laws for the protection of the Indians were observed, and to report abuses. They were instructed to visit each island personally, to ascertain the number of chiefs and tribes, and to see how they were treated by the

mission to colonise in the name of Your Majesties, by virtue of the authority which Your Highnesses had given them. He told them that they would do a great service to Your Majesties if they would give him permission to trade with the natives, for gold and pearls and precious stones and other things, all of which would become his property by paying the fifth part to Your Majesties. All this was granted by the said Reverend Fathers of St. Jerome, the Governors, inasmuch as he said in his account that he had discovered the land at his own cost, and moreover knew the secrets of it, and that he would provide in every respect as should best advance the service of Your Royal Highnesses. On the other hand, without communicating it to the said Jeronymite Fathers, he sent to Your Royal Highnesses a certain Gonzalo de

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holders of *encomiendas*, as well as by the governors, judges, and other officials. Hispaniola (Haiti), Cuba, and Jamaica, were particularly designated for their visitations, and they were enjoined to inspect the mines, and report on possible ameliorations. They had power to regulate the amount of meat to be allowed each labourer, the market price of necessities, the housing of the Indians, the education of children, marriages between Spaniards and natives, etc.

These friars were selected by Cardinal Ximenez from among twelve names presented to him by four Priors, sent by the Chapter to Madrid for that purpose, and they sailed from San Lucar, November 11, 1516, landing in San Domingo thirteen days later (Las Casas). Gayangos, *Cartas de Cortes*, p. 3, mentions the Jeronymite Fathers as numbering but two, Fray Luis de Figueroa, a native of Seville, who was Prior of Mejorada, and Fray Alonso de Santo Domingo, Prior of San Juan de Ortega. The third, however, was Fray Bernardino de Manzanedo.

The island of Hispaniola, where the Jeronymites resided, was discovered on December 6, 1492, by Christopher Columbus who named the harbour where he landed San Nicolas. San Domingo became the principal city and residence of the viceroy. In consequence of the dissensions between Don Diego Columbus, who held that office, and various persons, notably the royal treasurer, Miguel Pasamonte, who headed a faction against him, the Spanish government in 1510 established the *Royal Audiencia*. This was a court of appeal for all causes in which the viceroy had pronounced judgment. The name Hispaniola (Española), given by Columbus to the island, has been superseded by the original Indian name of Haiti.

Guzman,[1] with power of attorney, and the same account, saying that he had discovered the country at his own cost, thus rendering service to Your Majesties, and that he wished to conquer it at his own cost, and he prayed Your Royal Highnesses to make him *adelantado*[2] and governor of it, with certain privileges for which he asked further on, as Your Majesties will have seen by his account, and for which reason we do not express them here.

In the meantime, as the permission was given by the Reverend Fathers of St. Jerome, the Governors in the nameof Your Majesties, he hastened to fit out three ships and a brigantine, so that, if Your Majesties were not pleased to grant Gonzalo de Guzman what he had asked, the ships would have already been sent, with the permission given by the said Reverend Jeronymite Fathers, the Governors. He sent as Captain one of his relatives, called Juan de Grijalba,[3] and with him 160 men of the

Expedition of Grijalba

[1] Gonzalo de Guzman was a royal treasurer in the islands.

[2] Spanish title for the governor of a province.

[3] A native of Cuellar, who came to Cuba when a mere lad. Las Casas describes him as a youth of great promise, and Gomara says he was a nephew of Velasquez's. He was of gentle birth, and, as a fellow-townsman, he was treated by Velasquez with much consideration, whether he was a relative or not. The armada furnished him consisted of four caravels, the *Santiago*, *San Sebastian*, *La Trinidad*, and *Santa Maria de los Remedios;* the pilots were the same who went with the first expedition, with the addition of a fourth one, unnamed. There was a treasurer, Anton de Villasaña, an inspector, Francisco de Peñalosa, and a chaplain, Fray Juan Diaz; in all told above two hundred persons composed the company. After several false starts, they finally set sail on May 1st. This date, in spite of divers contradictions, is established by the *Itinerario de l'armata del Re Cattolico verso la Isola de Yucatan*, MDXVII., which is given in the *Documentos Ineditos* of Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta, Mexico, 1858.

Three other captains were Pedro de Alvarado, Francisco de Montejo, and Alonso Davila; the men including pilots and sailors numbered 250. They discovered the Tabasco River, which was henceforth named Grijalba, though the name Tabasco (Tabzcoob was the Indian name) remained to the province between Yucatan and Cuazocoalco.

After Rio Tabasco, they discovered a river (Xamapan, now called

inhabitants of said Island, amongst whom some of us came as Captains for the purpose of serving Your Majesties, and not only did we and those of the said armada come risking our own persons, but we and they also provided almost all the outfit of the said armada from our own resources, in which we and they spent a very great part of our fortunes. And there went again as pilot of this armada the same Anton de Alaminos, who first discovered the said country when he went with Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba.

In making this voyage, they followed in his former track, and, before they reached the said land, they discovered a small island, called Cozumel, which may measure

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Jamapa), which they called Banderas, because Indians carrying white flags were seen along the coast. They received them with great civility and interest, and traded to the amount of 15,000 dollars worth of gold (Bernal Diaz, cap. xiii.). Here the name of Montezuma was first heard by the Spaniards. The next stopping place was named Isla de los Sacrifios, because they found in a temple there six or seven bodies of men with their breasts cut open, and their hearts gone. The Island of Ulua was so named from the Indian word Culua, which the Spaniards imperfectly caught, and, to distinguish it from San Juan de Puerto Rico, they called the place San Juan de Ulua (Bernal Diaz, cap. xiv.; Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. ii.).

On the Island of Ulua the Spanish government afterwards built a fortress said to have cost forty millions of dollars, and which was the last stronghold of Spain in Mexico. On November 23, 1825, the President of the new republic announced its fall by a proclamation: "The standard of the republic floats over the castle of Ulua! I announce to you, fellow citizens, with inexpressible pleasure that, after a lapse of three hundred and four years, the flag of Castile has now disappeared from our coasts."

From here, Pedro de Alvarado with one of the four ships, the *San Sebastian*, was sent to report to Diego Velasquez what had been discovered. He took also the gold and treasures, and was to ask for further instructions concerning settlements, which Grijalba had no power to make. The others next went on to Panuco. Velasquez was vexed with Grijalba for not colonising, though the latter justified himself by the instructions given him, which expressly forbade this (Bernal Diaz, cap. xv.; Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. xviii.; Gomara, *Cronica*, cap. v., vi.; Cogolludo, lib. i., cap. iii., iv.; Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. ii.–iii.).

about thirty leagues, and lies off the southern part of the said land; and they arrived in the Island at a town, to which they gave the name of San Juan de Puerta Latina, [1] and the Island they named Santa Cruz. [2] The same day on which they arrived there about 150 Indians of the town came to see them, and as it appeared, on the following day these Indians abandoned the town and fled to the woods.

Being in need of water, the Captain hoisted sail in order to obtain it elsewhere that same day, and while pursuing his voyage, it was agreed to return to the said port and Island of Santa Cruz, where he anchored and went on shore, finding the town without people, as though it had never been inhabited. He took his supply of water, returning to his ships without taking soundings, or learning anything so as to be able to give a true account to Your Royal Highnesses concerning that Island.

Setting sail he left, keeping on his voyage until he arrived at the land which Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba had discovered, where they coasted about, from south to west, until they came to a bay, which the said Captain Gonzalo and the chief pilot, Anton de Alaminos, named Bay of Ascension. [3] This, according to the opinion of the pilots, is very near to Punta de las Velas, discovered by Vicente Yañez [4] which is the part [*passage in the MS. not intelligible*] of the Bay which is very

[1] The town thus named by Grijalba, as described in Note 1, page 124.

[2] Cozumel. Here the converted Indians, Melchor and Julian, began to act as interpreters.

[3] Bay of Ascension. This was on Thursday the 13th, feast of the Ascension, and they remained there reconnoitring until Sunday.

[4] Vincente Yañez Pinzon, who landed here about January 26, 1500, was one of the three Pinzon brothers who first sailed with Columbus from Palos in 1492. He afterwards commanded an expedition composed of four small ships which sailed from Palos in 1499, making the first discovery of land at the present Cape St. Augustine, on the coast of Brazil, in 1506. He again sailed with Juan de Solis, on a voyage to find the strait which it was thought joined the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and, in 1508, he repeated this fruitless experiment.

large, and it is thought that it reaches to the Sea of the North.

Thence they returned along the same coast by which they had gone, until they rounded the point of the said land, and, continuing in a northerly direction, they sailed until they arrived at the said Point Campoche, whose chief was named Lazaro, where Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba had stopped to trade, and, as ordered by Diego Velasquez, as well as to take the water he greatly needed, landed there.

As soon as the natives saw them coming, they placed themselves near their town, in array of battle, so as to defend its entrance. The Captain called to them, through the interpreters who accompanied him, and certain Indians came, whom he made to understand that he came merely for the purpose of trading with them for such things as they might have, and to get water; and thus he went with them until they arrived at a place, very near their town, where there was a spring. While taking the water he asked them through the said interpreter for gold, saying he would give them in exchange the valuables which he brought, and, as soon as the Indians saw this, having no gold to give him, they told him to go away; but he begged them to allow him to finish taking water, saying that he would immediately leave. In spite of this, however, he was unable to save himself from being obliged the next day, at the hour of mass, to fight the Indians, armed with their bows and arrows, their lances, and *rodelas*, [1] so that they killed a Spaniard, and wounded the said Captain Grijalba and many others. That same afternoon they re-embarked in their caravels with all their people, without having gone into the town of the

Grijalba's Encounters with the Indians

[1] These were round shields for defence, which were adorned with different coloured feathers of herons, parrots, and other birds, according to the category of the troops, or the heraldic emblem of the chief.

said Indians, and without having learned anything which they could truly relate to Your Majesties.

From there they went along the said coast until they came to a river, which they named Grijalba, and which they ascended about the hour of vespers. Early the following morning, they found on both sides of the river a great number of Indians and warriors, with their bows and arrows, and lances, and *rodelas*, to defend the entrance to their country; and to some, it seemed there were about five thousand Indians.

The Captain seeing this, no one landed, but he spoke to them from the ship through his interpreters, praying them to approach nearer so that he might explain to them the motives of his coming, and twenty Indians entered a canoe, and cautiously approached the ships. The Captain Grijalba then told them, and made them understand through his interpreter, that he had come only to barter, and that he wished to be their friend, and that they should bring their gold for which he would give them many valuables which he carried; and thus they did.

The next day, they brought certain jewels of thin gold, for which the said Captain gave them in return such valuables as he thought proper, and they returned to their town; and the said Captain remained there that day.

The next day he set sail, without learning anything else about the country, and continued until he arrived at the Bay, to which they gave the name of San Juan.

The Captain went ashore there with some of his people to some desolate sand-hills, and as, when the natives had seen the ships coming along the coast, they had assembled, he spoke to them, through his interpreter, and had a table brought on which he spread out some of his valuables, making them understand that he had come to trade with them and to be their friend. When the Indians saw and understood this, they brought some stuffs, and ornaments of gold, which they traded with the Cap-

tain; and from there the said Captain Grijalba dispatched one of the caravels to Diego Velasquez, with all that they had up till then obtained.

The caravel having departed for the Island of Fernandina where Diego Velasquez was, the Captain Grijalba went down the coast with the remaining caravels, cruising for a distance of about forty-five leagues without landing, or seeing anything except what could be seen from the sea. He then set out to return towards the Island of Fernandina, and never more did he see anything of the country worth mentioning, from which your Royal Highnesses may believe that all the accounts which have been made about this country cannot have been exact, because they knew nothing more of the secrets of it than what it has suited their purpose to write.

As soon as the said caravel, which the Captain Juan de Grijalba had dispatched from the Bay of San Juan, arrived, and Diego Velasquez saw the gold which it carried, and learned from Grijalba's letters about the stuffs and valuables which had been given in exchange, it seemed to him, according to information given him by those who arrived in the said caravel, that he had obtained little in proportion to what he expected. He declared that he had not even covered the cost he had incurred in the said armada, and he was vexed, and showed dissatisfaction at the little which Captain Grijalba had accomplished in this country.

In truth, Diego Velasquez had no reason to complain, because his outlays in the said armada were covered from certain casks, and tuns of wine, and other merchandise, and boxes of laced shirts, and beads, which he had sent with it. The wine was sold there to us at four dollars in gold, which are two thousand *maravedis* [1] the *aroba*,

[1] A small Spanish coin: Bancroft (*Hist. Mex.*, vol. ii., p. 376) gives the value of the *ducat* as equal to 375 *maravedis*, and *peso de*

and each shirt at two dollars in gold, and the string of green beads at two dollars, so that he thus covered his outlay in the armada, and even made money. We make special mention of this to Your Majesties that it may be known that the armadas, which until now have been fitted out by Diego Velasquez, have been intended as much for trading merchandise as for privateers, and this with our persons and with our property; and although we have suffered infinite hardships we have served, and we shall serve, Your Royal Highnesses as long as life lasts.

Diego Velasquez being vexed by the small amount of gold that had been brought him, and wishing to obtain more, determined, without making it known to the Governors, the Jeronymite Fathers, to equip a swift armada, and to send it in search of his relative, the said Captain Juan de Grijalba. To do this at less cost to himself, he spoke to Fernando Cortes, a resident and alcalde for Your Majesties in the city of Santiago, proposing to him that they should fit out between them eight or ten ships, because at that time Fernando Cortes had more resources than any other person in the said Island, and because it was believed that more people would enlist with him than with any other.

The said Fernando Cortes, considering what Diego Velasquez had proposed, and moved by zeal to serve

minas as 450 *maravedis*, which he computes as equal to $9.75; he refers to Clemencin, secretary of the Spanish Royal Academy as his authority. Prescott (*Conquest of Mex.*) computes the *ducat* at $8.75, and gives the *peso de oro*, and the *castellano* as identical, and worth $11.67. Mr. George Folsom, in his English translation of three Letters of Cortes, gives the value of the *castellano* as only $2.75. According to these calculations, the *peso de minas*, and the *peso de oro*, were different coins. The value of these monies is difficult to estimate. Their purchasing power was far greater than their exact equivalent would be to-day, and the value of articles of European manufacture, of horses, iron, and other imported necessities was variable, according to their scarcity, and to the needs of the buyer. Nails, horseshoes, and like objects, sometimes cost their weight in gold, or double in silver.

Your Royal Highnesses, was ready to spend all he had, and to equip almost two parts of this armada at his own cost, not only in ships, but also in stores, and moreover to distribute his moneys amongst those who were going in the armada, and who needed to provide things necessary for the voyage.

Cortes Given Command of the Armada

The armada having been fitted and equipped, Diego Velasquez in the name of Your Majesties, named the said Fernando Cortes Captain of it, that he should come to this land to trade, and accomplish what Grijalba had failed to do. The agreement respecting the said armada, although he did not invest or spend more than one-third part of it, was made entirely according to Diego Velasquez's wishes as Your Royal Highnesses may command to be verified from the instructions and faculty which the said Fernando Cortes received from him in the name of Your Majesties. These we now send with these our procurators to Your Royal Highnesses.

Let it be known to Your Majesties that the larger part of the third, which Diego Velasquez spent in fitting out the said armada, consisted in investing his money in wines, and clothing, and in other things of little value, in order to sell them to us here at a much higher price than they had cost him, so that we may say that Diego Velasquez has made his bargains, and the profits on his money, amongst us Spaniards, vassals of your Royal Highnesses, doing a very good business.

Having finished fitting out the said armada, Your Royal Highnesses' Captain, Fernando Cortes, sailed upon his voyage from the Island of Fernandina, having ten caravels, and four hundred men at arms, amongst whom were many knights and other noblemen, and sixteen horses. Pursuing their voyage, the first land where they arrived was the Island of Cozumel (now called Santa Cruz, as has been said), in the port of San Juan

de Puerta Latina. Upon landing, the town which existed there was found to be deserted, as though it had never been inhabited, and the Captain Fernando Cortes, wishing to know the cause of that place being deserted, brought the people on land, and quartered them in that town. While there with his people he learned from three Indians, who had been taken in a canoe [1] at sea while going to Yucatan, that the caciques of that Island, seeing the Spaniards were approaching, had, out of fear of them (not knowing with what purpose, and in what disposition they came), abandoned their town, and gone with all their Indians into the woods.

Fernando Cortes, speaking to them through the medium of an interpreter who accompanied him, told them we were not going to do them any evil or injury, but only to instruct them, and win them to the knowledge of our Holy Catholic Faith, so that they might become vassals of Your Majesties, serving and obeying them, as had all the Indians of these parts which the Spaniards have settled, who are likewise vassals of Your Royal Highnesses. The said Captain, having thus reassured them they put aside their fears, in great part, and said that they would go and call the caciques who had gone into the woods; and the Captain immediately gave them a letter, so that the said caciques might come in all confidence, and, the Captain having given them a term of five days in which to return, they went off thus.

Negotiations at Cozumel

But while the Captain was waiting for the reply the Indians were to bring, and as already three or four days beyond the five which he had stipulated had elapsed, and he saw that they did not come, he determined, in order that the Island might not remain deserted, to send

[1] Their canoes were made of tree-trunks, hollowed, and were sometimes large enough to hold forty or fifty men (Bernal Diaz, cap. ii.).

along the coast to the other side. He despatched two captains, therefore, each with one hundred men, directing that one should go to the extremity of the island from one side, and the other from the other, and that they should speak to the caciques whom they might encounter, telling them that he was waiting for them in that town and port of San Juan de Puerta Latina to speak to them on behalf of Your Majesties. He also directed that they should invite and attract them as best they could, so as to induce them to come to the said port of San Juan, and that they should do them no harm, either in their persons, or houses, or property, so as not to alarm them, nor drive them further away than they already were.

The two captains went as the Captain Fernando Cortes had ordered them, and three or four days afterwards they returned, saying that all the towns they had found were empty and bringing with them ten or twelve persons whom they had captured. Amongst these was a principal Indian to whom the said Fernando Cortes spoke in the name of Your Highnesses, through his interpreter, telling him to go and call the caciques, as he would on no account leave the Island without having seen and spoken with them. The Indian answered that he would do this, and thus he left with a letter to the said caciques, returning two days later with the principal cacique, who said that he was Lord of the Island, and had come to see for what he was wanted.

The Captain spoke to him through the interpreter, and told him that he did not wish, nor had he come to do them any harm, but in order to bring them to a knowledge of our Holy Faith, and to let them know that our rulers were the greatest Princes in the world, and that they obeyed a Greater Prince. And what the said Captain Fernando Cortes told them he wanted of them was that the caciques and Indians of the said Island should also

obey Your Royal Highnesses, and that in so doing they would be much favoured, and no one would ever molest them. The Cacique answered that he would be glad to do this, and he immediately sent to call all the principal people of the Island, who came and were much pleased with all that the said Captain Fernando Cortes had told the chief cacique of the Island. Thus he ordered them to come back, which they joyfully did, becoming reassured to such an extent that, within a few days, the towns were as full of people as before, and all the Indians went about amongst us with as little fear as if they had already had a long period of intercourse with us.

In the meantime, the Captain learned that there were in the power of certain caciques in Yucatan, some Spaniards who had been made captives as long since as seven years, when, having been lost in a certain caravel [1] which was wrecked on the reefs of Jamaica, [2] while coming from Tierra Firma, they had escaped in one of the boats of the caravel, and reached that coast. From that time they had been held captives and prisoners by the Indians. Since the said Captain Fernando Cortes had left the Island of Fernandina to seek for these Spaniards, and as he here received information about them, and about the country where they were, it seemed to him that he was

Spanish Prisoners in Yucatan

[1] The caravel of Valdivia, sent from Darien and wrecked (1511) on the reefs called *las Viboras*, situated fifteen leagues to the south of Jamaica, and which extend for a distance of forty-five leagues, from 27° 10′ longitude, and 17° north latitude (Alcedo, *Diccionario Geogr. Hist. de las Indias Occid.*). Twenty were saved in an open boat without sails, food, or water, and, after thirteen days' drifting, reached the Maya coast. Seven or eight had died in the meantime from exhaustion, and Valdivia and five others were fattened and sacrificed by the Mayas, who captured them on their landing, and were afterwards eaten. Notice of those who escaped is given in a later note.

[2] Discovered by Columbus on his second voyage, in 1494, and named Santiago. His son Diego effected its conquest, and governed it from San Domingo, through his captains, of whom the best known was Francisco de Garay.

rendering a great service to God and to Your Majesty in striving to liberate them from their imprisonment and captivity. He himself with the whole fleet would have gone immediately to rescue them, had not the pilots told him on no account to do this, as it would be the cause of the loss of the fleet and all the people of it, because the coast was very rough, as it really is, and has no port or any place where the ships could anchor. For this reason he abandoned the idea, and ordered that certain Indians, who had told him they knew that cacique with whom those Spaniards were, should go in a canoe; and he wrote to the Spaniards that the only reason why he gave up coming himself with his armada to liberate them was because the coast was very bad and rough for anchoring, but that he prayed them to strive for their liberation, and to escape in canoes, and that he should wait for them in the Island of Santa Cruz.

Three days after the said Captain had sent those Indians with his letters, as it appeared to him that he had not acted satisfactorily, and believing that those Indians would not know how to carry out his wishes, he determined to send forty Spaniards to the said coast with two brigantines, and a boat from his armada, so that they might recover those captive Spaniards if they could find them. With them he sent three other Indians, who should go ashore with another letter [1] of his to seek the Spanish prisoners. When those two brigantines and the

[1] Noble Sirs,—I left Cuba with a fleet of eleven ships, and five hundred Spaniards, and have arrived at Cozumel, whence I write you this letter.

The people of this island assure me that there are five or six bearded white men in this country, who greatly resemble us, and, I conjecture, though they can give me no other indications, that you are Spaniards. I, and the gentlemen, who have come with me to explore and take possession of these countries, earnestly beg you to come to us within five or six days after you receive this, without further delay or excuse.

If you will come, all of us will recognise, and thank you, for the

boat reached the coast, they landed the three Indians, and sent them to seek for the Spaniards, as the Captain had ordered; and they remained six days along the coast with much difficulty, always waiting for them, though they were almost lost and nearly foundered as the sea along the said coast was very rough, just as the pilots had said. Seeing then that neither the Spanish captives, nor the Indians who had gone to look for them, returned, they determined to go back to the Island of Santa Cruz where the Captain Fernando Cortes was waiting for them.

When they reached the Island, and the Captain learned their bad news he was much grieved, and immediately proposed to embark the next day, firmly resolved to visit that country, even if the whole flotilla should be lost, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there was any truth in the report which Captain Juan de Grijalba had sent to the Island of Fernandina, to the effect that it was all an invention, and that no such Spaniards as were said to be captives had ever arrived on that coast.

Having taken this decision, he had all the people embarked, except himself, and some other twenty Spaniards, who remained with him on shore. The weather had been most favourable to his intention to leave the port, but there suddenly sprang up a contrary wind, with squalls of rain, so that the pilots advised the Captain not to set sail while the weather was unfavourable for getting to sea; so, in view of this, the Captain commanded all on board the armada to disembark once more.

Arrival of Jeronimo de Aguilar

The next day at noon, a canoe with sails was seen coming in the direction of the Island, in which, upon its approach, we saw one of the Spanish captives, whose name was Jeronimo

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assistance this armada shall receive from you. I send a brigantine to bring you, with two ships as escort.

HERNAN CORTES.

The Indian took this letter tied in his hair.

de Aguilar, [1] who told us all about how he came to be lost, and the length of time he had been in captivity, which is as we have already related to Your Royal Highnesses.

Of a truth, this adverse weather coming upon us so unexpectedly seemed a great mystery and miracle of God, and led us to believe that no enterprise undertaken in Your Majesties' service, be it what it may, could end in anything but good.

We learned from Jeronimo de Aguilar, that the other Spaniards, who were lost with him in the shipwrecked caravel, were scattered over all the land, which he told us was very extensive, and that it would be quite impossible to gather them without staying and losing much time over it. So, as the Captain Fernando Cortes saw that the provisions of the armada were giving out, and that the people would be exposed to suffer great want from hunger if they delayed longer, and that this would not contribute to the object of their voyage, he determined, with the approval of the others to depart. They immediately set sail, therefore, leaving that Island of Cozumel, which is now called Santa Cruz, entirely pacified, so that had it been their intention to colonise, the Indians

[1] He was a native of Encija, and had taken holy orders. Seeing the dreadful fate of their companions, Aguilar and Gonzalo Guerrero managed to escape from the cages, in which they were being fattened for the sacrificial feasts, and to lose themselves in the forests. Here they were finally captured by the cacique of another tribe, who was less bloodthirsty, and held them as slaves instead of killing them. Aguilar's virtues and abilities soon attracted attention, and won the respect of his captor, and he rose to a position of influence in the country.

When the news came of the arrival of the ships with more white men, and Cortes's letter was delivered to Aguilar, he procured permission to go to his countrymen; but his companion Guerrero, who had married, and had a family, refused to go, for he was ashamed to show himself naked and tattooed, and with his nose and lips pierced in Indian fashion. Jeronimo de Aguilar was not distinguishable from the Indians, as he was burned nearly black, and wore the same ornaments. He remained with Cortes as his interpreter, rendering invaluable services throughout the conquest.

would have served them to the best of their ability; and the caciques were very pleased and contented both with what the said captain had told them on the part of Your Royal Highnesses, and with the many ornaments he had given them; and I am confident that any Spaniards who from henceforward shall arrive at Cozumel will be as well received there as in any of those Islands which have been long since settled. The said Island is small, and there is no creek or river in it, and all the water which the Indians drink is from wells, and there are only rocks, and stones, and mountains. The only trade which the Indians have is in bee-hives, and our Procurators will bear to Your Highnesses specimens of the honey and the bee-hives that you may command them to be examined.[1]

Be it known to Your Majesties, that the Captain exhorted the caciques of the said Island, admonishing them to renounce the heathen sect in which they were living, and, when they asked him to give them a law according to which they might henceforth live, the said Captain instructed them as best he could in the Catholic Faith. He left them also a cross of wood in a lofty house, and an image of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, making them understand perfectly well what they were obliged to do to become good Christians; and they showed that they received everything with the best will, and thus they were left contented and happy.

After leaving the Island, we went to Yucatan, and, continuing towards the north, we kept in sight of land, until we arrived at the great river called Grijalba (Rio

[1] Clavigero notices six different varieties of bees in Mexico, some like those common in Europe, and others without stings, which make the honey "Estabentun," the clearest, sweetest, and most aromatic known. These bees are found in Yucatan, and Chiapa, and it is doubtless their honey which is here mentioned. It was collected every two months, but the November honey was the best, because it was made from a very sweet flower called "Estabentun," which blooms in September.

de Tabasco), which, according to the account given to Your Royal Highnesses, is where Captain de Grijalba, relative to Diego Velasquez, had been. The mouth of that river is so shallow, that none of the larger ships could enter, but, as the said Captain Fernando Cortes is so devoted to the service of Your Majesties, and has the best intention to relate truthfully everything about that country, he determined not to go further until he had learned the mystery of that river, and because of their great reputation for wealth, of the towns which people its banks.

He therefore embarked all the people of his armada in his small brigantines and boats, and ascended the said river, observing the country and the towns along it; and when we came to the first town we found the Indians drawn up on the banks, to whom the said Captain spoke through the interpreter, and through the said Geronimo de Aguilar, who having, as we have heretofore stated, been a captive in Yucatan, understood and spoke the language of that country very well. He made them understand how he had not come to do them any harm or evil, but only to speak to them on the part of Your Majesties; and that he, therefore, prayed that they would allow and approve of his landing, because we had no place to sleep that night in the brigantines and barques, in which we could not even stand on our feet; and as for returning to our ships, it was already very late and they were on the high sea. The Indians answered to this that he could say all he wished from where he was, but that he should not talk of landing, neither he nor his people, for they would dispute his entrance; and, saying this, they menaced us with their arrows, bidding us to go away from there. So as it was late in the afternoon (it being already the hour of sundown), the Captain ordered us to go to some sand-hills which were opposite the town, and there we slept that night.

Cortes at Rio de Tabasco

On the morning of the following day some Indians came in a canoe and brought us a certain number of chickens and a little maize, which might be sufficient for [*text missing*] number of men for one meal. They told us to take that, and to depart from their country, and the captain spoke to them through the interpreter whom we had, and made them understand that he would in no wise go away until he knew the secret of it, so that he might write a true account of it to Your Majesties. He again begged them that, as they would suffer no harm from him, they would not obstruct his entrance to the said town, because they were vassals of Your Royal Highnesses. But still they answered, that we should not venture into the said town but must depart from their country.

When they were gone the Captain determined to go there, so he ordered one of his captains to start with two hundred men by a road which he had discovered during the night we slept on land, while he, himself, embarked with about eighty men in the barques and brigantines, stationing himself in front of the town, ready to disembark whenever they would allow him.

When he came there he found the Indians ready for battle, armed with their bows and arrows and lances and *rodelas*, and they told him to depart from their country, but if he would not go, and wanted war, to begin at once, for they were men to defend their town. After the Captain had required [1] them three times and asked Your Highnesses' notary, whom he carried with him, to bear witness to the fact, he told them that he did not want war. Seeing, however, that it was the determination of the said Indians to resist his landing, and that they began to discharge arrows at us, he ordered the charges of artillery to be fired, and that we should

Fighting at Tabasco

[1] See Appendix II. at close of Letter.

charge them. When the shots were being fired and while landing they wounded some of us, but finally, in consequence of our rapid charges, and of the attack in the rear by those who had gone by the road, they fled, leaving us the town, and we took possession of that part of it which seemed to us the stronger.

The next day following, at the hour of vespers, two Indians,[1] on the part of the caciques, came to us, bring-

[1] The appearance of the ships of de Cordoba and Grijalba, and the fighting in Yucatan, were quickly reported to Montezuma, whose superstitious mind was so affected by events, in which he saw the disasters to himself and his people foretold by Quetzalcoatl, that his first impulse was to save himself by some enchantment or incantation, which should translate him to the abode, or Walhalla, of the famous kings and demi-gods of antiquity. The simultaneous apparition of a great comet in the sky confirmed these forebodings, and he gave himself entirely into the hands of his diviners and necromancers, who exercised all their resources of interpreting dreams, reading signs in natural phenomena, and studying the heavens, to obtain direction for their sovereign in his perplexity. Many, whose dreams presaged evil, were starved to death or put to tortures; a reign of terror set in, and none dared to speak in the sovereign's presence, while the prisons were full of luckless magicians, and death penalties were inflicted even upon their families in the provinces (Duran, cap. lviii., and Tezozomoc. apud Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. ii.). As the proofs of the presence of the white strangers in their floating houses accumulated, despite Montezuma's reluctance to believe the reports which were repeatedly brought to him, the sovereign fell into a state of profound depression, and despairing of warding off the ominous presence, he ordered costly gifts to be especially made, and he sent the two envoys, Teutlamacazqui and Cuitlalpitoc, to Pinotl, governor of Cuetlachtla, commanding him to provide in every way for the reception and entertainment of the celestial guests. After the departure of Grijalba's men, the fears of Montezuma somewhat subsided, and he persuaded himself that he had staved off the impending disaster. The governor of the coast provinces, however, had strict orders to keep watch, and immediately report any further appearance of the fearsome strangers. Hence the arrival of Cortes, nine months later, was at once announced, by fleet messengers, to the Emperor, who decided in council to send ambassadors to welcome him, and bring exact information concerning all they could see and learn. Thus, on Easter Day, the twenty-fourth of April, Teuhtlilli, governor of Cuetlachtla and Cuitlalpitoc, who had been before sent to Grijalba, appeared before Cortes. While extending the welcome his superstitious fears forbade him to

ing certain jewels of very thin gold of little value. They told the Captain that they brought him those ornaments to induce him to go away, and, without doing them any harm or injury, to leave them their land where they had always been. The said Captain answered, saying, that, as to doing them any harm or injury, he had no such wish, and as to leaving them the land, they must understand that from henceforward they were to have for their Lords, the greatest Princes of the earth, whose vassals they would be, and that they would have to serve them, and that, in acting thus, Your Majesties would grant them many mercies, and favours would grow upon them, and that they should be protected and defended from their enemies. They answered that they would be satisfied to do this, but still they required that their country should be left to them. Thus we all became friends, and, our friendship being established, the Captain told them that the Spaniards there with him had nothing to eat, as nothing had been brought from the ships, and he prayed them to bring us food during the time we remained on the Island; they answered that the next day they would, and thus they went away, and remained away that day and the next, nor did they bring us any food.

As all of us were, on this account, in great need of supplies, on the third day some Spaniards asked permission of the Captain to go to some farms in the

withhold, the Emperor secretly charged his magicians, whom he assembled from far and wide, to rid the country of the strangers by the power of magic. The allied kings and nobles were in constant council from which no decision issued, the greater number being of Cacamatzin's opinion, that, if the strangers were gods, it was useless to resist them, if they were envoys of a distant monarch, they should be received as such, while if they were men who came with hostile intent, they could easily be crushed. Only Cuitlahuac, lord of Itztapalapan, opposed this view (Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. Chichimeca*, cap. lxxx.) This prince with patriotic foresight was for crushing the strangers nstantly, and before they could work the nation any evil.

neighbourhood to look for something to eat; and the Captain, seeing that the Indians did not return as they had promised, sent four captains with more than two hundred men to hunt round about the town, and see if they could find anything to eat. While these were engaged in searching, they met many Indians who immediately shot arrows at them, wounding twenty Spaniards, and had not the Captain been immediately advised of this, so as to go, as he did, to their assistance, they would probably have killed more than half the Christians. So we all retreated to our camp, where the wounded were cared for, and those who had fought obtained some rest.

The Captain, seeing how wrongly the Indians had acted, in that, instead of bringing us food as they had agreed, they had wounded us with their arrows, and made war upon us, ordered ten of the horses and mares we had on board to be brought, and all the people to be prepared, because he thought that those Indians, encouraged by the advantage they had obtained the day before, would fall upon us hoping to injure us. On the next day when all was thus prepared, he sent certain captains with three hundred men, to the place where the battle had been fought the day before, to learn if the Indians were still there or what had become of them. A little later, he sent two other captains, with a rear-guard and another hundred men, and the said Captain Fernando Cortes went secretly to one side with ten men on horseback. Proceeding in this order, those who went ahead met a great number of warriors coming to attack us in our camp, and, if we had not gone out that day to encounter them on the road, we should probably have found ourselves in great distress.

When the captain of artillery, who went ahead, made certain requirements before the notary, of the warriors whom he met, giving them to understand through the

interpreters that we desired no war, but peace and love with them, they did not bother to answer us with words, but let fly a thick volley of arrows at us. While those in the fore were fighting with the Indians, two captains of the rear-guard came up, and, after two hours of fighting, the Captain Fernando Cortes arrived with the horsemen, coming out from the woods at the point where the Indians were surrounding the Spaniards on all sides; and so he kept up the fight with the Indians for an hour, and such was their multitude that neither those who were fighting the Spanish foot-soldiers could see the horsemen, nor know where they were, nor could the horsemen, advancing and retreating amongst the Indians, see each other. As soon, however, as the Spaniards realised that the horsemen had come up, they charged quickly upon the Indians, who immediately began to fly, and pursued them for half a league. The Captain, seeing that the Indians were in full flight, and that nothing remained to be done, and that his troops were very fatigued, gave the order that all should collect in some farmhouses near by; and, when they were assembled, twenty were found to be wounded, of whom no one died, nor did anyone who had been wounded the day before. Thus assembled, and the wounded cared for, we returned to our camp, carrying with us two Indians whom we had captured, whom the Captain ordered to be liberated, and sent letters by them to the caciques, telling them that, if they would come to him, he would pardon them the offence which they had committed, and they would be his friends.

Results of the Hostilities at Tabasco

That same afternoon two who seemed to be principal Indians[1] came, saying that they were very sorry for the past, and that those caciques besought him to pardon them, and not to do any further injury nor kill any more of their people, for

[1] The first messengers seemed from their dress to be slaves, and though their gifts of chickens, smoked fish, and maize-cakes, were

there were as many as two hundred and twenty men slain. They also said that the past should be the past, and henceforward they wished to be vassals of those Princes of whom he had told them, giving and holding themselves as such, and that they would acknowledge and bind themselves to serve them whenever they should be commanded to do so in the name of Your Majesties. Thus peace was made and agreed upon, and the Captain asked the said Indians, through the interpreter whom we had with us, who were the people who had taken part in the battle, and they answered that they came from eight provinces, and according to their counting they were in all forty thousand men,[1] and that they knew perfectly well how to count up to that number. Your Royal

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accepted, and they were given some glass beads in return, they were sent back to say that if their people wanted peace the chiefs must come themselves, as the Spaniards could not treat with slaves. Some thirty head-men appeared the next day, bringing the usual present of provisions, and asking permission to bury and cremate their dead, offering to conclude peace the following day. This was agreed to, and the dead were buried, or burned according to the usage of each tribe. At noon the next day, the chiefs appeared, and in the conversation Jeronimo de Aguilar acted as interpreter. Cortes adroitly arranged a show of gun firing and horsemanship to impress them, and he threw all the blame for the fighting upon them, but declared that, if they were ready for peace his sovereigns would regard them as friends, and favour and help them. Negotiations terminated the next day, when an assembly of all the neighbouring chiefs acknowledged themselves vassals of the Spanish king, giving Cortes presents of gold and slaves. Amongst these latter was Marina, of whom further notice will appear.

[1] Andres de Tapia fixes the number at 48,000, but these figures seem hardly possible, and Orozco y Berra observes that they must be taken as representing the idea of multitude, rather than an actual counting. This decisive battle, which took place on March 25th, became known as the battle of Ceutla, and in Gomara's chronicle, as well as in Tapia's narrative, and that of others, the victory was attributed to the miraculous intervention of St. James, the patron of Spain, or of St. Peter the patron of Cortes. Bernal Diaz says that it may be as Gomara describes, and that "*los glorios apostolos Señor Santiago and Señor San Pedro*" did appear, but he, miserable sinner, was not worthy to behold the apparition.

Highnesses may believe for certain, that this battle was won, rather by the will of God, than by our forces, because weak was the defence of our four hundred against forty thousand warriors.

After we had become good friends, they gave us, during the four or five days we still remained there, some one hundred and forty dollars of gold in pieces of all kinds, and very thin, and so much esteemed by them that it seemed their country was very poor in gold, because it appeared certain that the little they possessed had come from other parts in trading. The land is very good and provisions are abundant, both in maize, as well as fruits, fish, and other things which they eat. This town is situated on the banks of the afore-named river, about which extends a plain, where there are many farms and cultivated fields, such as they have. He [Cortes] reproved them for the evil they did in adoring their idols and gods, and he made them understand that they should come to the knowledge of our Very Holy Faith, and he left them a large wooden cross set up on an elevation, and they remained very satisfied, saying they would hold it in great veneration, and would adore it; thus these Indians became our friends and vassals of Your Royal Highnesses.

The said Captain Fernando Cortes left there, continuing his voyage, and we arrived at the port, and bay, which is called San Juan, where the above-named Captain Grijalba traded, of which extensive relation has heretofore been made to Your Majesty. Immediately upon our arrival, the natives came to inquire what caravels were those which had arrived, and as it was very late that day, almost night, the Captain remained quietly in the caravel, and ordered that no one should go on shore. Early the next day the Captain landed with a great part of the people of his armada, and found two of the principal Indians there, to whom he presented

certain of his own valuable garments, and, speaking to them through the interpreters, he gave them to understand that he had come to these parts, by command of Your Royal Highnesses, to speak to them, and to tell them what they should do to advance your service. For this he besought them that they should immediately go to their town, and call the cacique, or caciques who might be there, to come and speak to him; and, to ensure their coming, he gave them two shirts for those caciques, and two jackets, one of silk and one of velvet, also various caps, and some hawk's bells; so they went with these valuables to the said caciques. The next day a little before noon one of the caciques of that town came, to whom the said Captain spoke, and made him understand, through the interpreter, that he had not come to do them any hurt nor injury, but to inform them that they were to be vassals of Your Majesties, and how they were to serve them and to pay tribute of what they had in their country, as did all who are such. And the cacique an swered that he was very satisfied to be such, and to obey, and that he would be much pleased to serve them, and to have such high Princes for lords as the Captain had made them understand Your Royal Majesties were. Immediately afterwards, the Captain told him that, since he was so well disposed towards his King and Lord, he would see what great favours Your Majesties would grant him in the future; and, saying this, he made him put on a shirt of holland, and a robe of velvet, and a girdle of gold, with which the said cacique was much pleased and happy. He told the Captain then, that he wanted to go to his country, and asked him to wait for him there, for the next day he would come back, and bring him such things as he had, so that we might more fully understand his good will towards the service of Your Royal Highnesses. Thus he took his leave, and departed; and, the next day, the said cacique returned, as

he had agreed, and spreading a white cloth before the Captain, he offered him certain precious jewels of gold, which he placed upon it; of these, and the others which we afterwards obtained, we make relation to Your Majesties in a memorial which our procurators take with them.

After the said cacique had taken leave of us, and returned satisfied to his house, some of those noble persons [1] who came in this armada, gentlemen, and sons of gentlemen, zealous in the service of our Lord, and of Your Royal Highnesses, and desirous for the exaltation of your royal crown, and the extension of your dominions, and the increase of your revenues, assembled and spoke with the Captain Fernando Cortes, saying that this land was good and that, judging by the sample of gold which that cacique had brought, it was reasonable to believe that it must be very rich, and that he and all his Indians were well disposed towards us. For these reasons, it seemed to us that it was not advantageous for Your Majesties' service to do as Diego Velasquez had ordered the said Captain Fernando Cortes to do (which was to trade for all the gold we could, and, having obtained it, to return to the island of Fernandina, in order that the said Diego Velasquez, and the said Captain mightpr ofit exclusively by it,

Decision to Colonise

[1] The armada was composed of eleven vessels, of which the largest, on which Cortes sailed, was of 100 *tonels*, the *tonel* being somewhat more than one ton. The number of men is variously given by different authorities, but, in the memorandum of Cortes at the time of his *residencia* in 1534, it is stated that there were 530 men. The persons of nobility must be sought among the leaders and captains who were Pedro de Alvarado, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Francisco de Orozco, Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, Diègo de Ordaz, Alonzo de Avila, Juan de Escalante, Francisco de Montejo, Francisco de Morla, Francisco de Saucedo, Juan Velasquez de Leon, and Cristobal de Olid. Pedro de Alvarado had two brothers, Jorge and Gomez, and a natural brother, called Juan, and there may have been some other adventurers of good origin amongst the company (Orozco y Berra; tom, iv., cap. iii.).

and that it seemed better to all of us that a town should be founded and peopled there in the name of Your Royal Highnesses. In this, there should be a court of justice, so that you would have your jurisdiction in this country just as in your kingdoms and dominions, since possibly this country, being peopled by Spaniards, in addition to the increase of the kingdoms and dependencies, and the incomes of Your Majesties, you might show some favours to us, and to the colonists who would come there hereafter.

Having decided this, we all agreed with one accord and mind, and we made a requirement to the said Captain, in which we told him that, as he saw how agreeable it would be to the service of God, Our Lord, and of Your Majesties, that this country should be peopled (giving the reasons which we have heretofore recounted to Your Highnesses), we required him to cease trading, as he was doing, inasmuch as it was equivalent to destroying the country to a great extent, and that Your Majesties would thus be but poorly served; and that, for the same reason, we asked and required him to name alcaldes, and municipal authorities, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, for the town which was to be founded and built by us. This was accompanied by intimations in legal form that we would protest against him if he acted otherwise. This requirement having been made to the said Captain, he replied that he would give his answer the next day; and the said Captain, having seen how all that we had asked him to do would be profitable to the service of Your Royal Highnesses, answered us the next day, saying that he was exclusively devoted to the service of Your Majesties, and that, without considering the profit which might result to him from carrying on the trading as planned, so as to recover the great expenses which had been sustained out of his property in fitting out that armada with the said Diego Velasquez, but rather putting

aside everything else, he was glad and satisfied to do whatever we had asked him to do, inasmuch as it was advantageous to the service of Your Royal Highnesses. Immediately, therefore, he began with great diligence to found and people a town, to which the name was given of Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz. [1] He named those of us who will sign at the endas alcaldes and municipal officers of the said town

Foundation of Vera Cruz

[1] The legal formalities so scrupulously observed, were a trifle farcical in this particular instance, and Cortes doubtless listened to the reading of the "requirements" with a solemn exterior, but with his "tongue in his cheek." The narrative here is clear. He resigned the authority he had received from Velasquez, the royal governor of Cuba, into the hands of the municipal authorities he had himself appointed in response to the popular demand, and who thereby likewise became royal officials. They in their turn exercised their powers to appoint him Captain-General, and Chief Justice, of the new colony, and thus, by due form of law, Cortes found himself, within twenty-four hours after his abdication, installed as the recognised dispenser of civil justice, and as military commander. He showed a becoming reluctance to accept the nomination, and finally had all the appearance of yielding to an irresistible expression of the popular will. Bernal Diaz quotes to the point an old Spanish proverb: *Tu mi lo ruegas y yo mi lo quiero.* The partisans of Cortes, led by the Alvarados, Olid, Avila, Escalante, and Puertocarrero, secretly formed a party among the men and propounded the new plan of colonisation for the crown, in substitution for that of merely trading in the interest of Diego Velasquez, arguing that he, Velasquez would get the lion's share of the profits, on their return to Cuba, while they would be about as poor as when they started. This idea won adherents, but was not slow in reaching the knowledge of the friends of Velasquez, who protested vigorously against such a betrayal of confidence, and insisted that they should return to Cuba with the treasure, and make their report to the governor. Cortes feigned to accede to their view, and perplexed them greatly by giving immediate orders to embark the next day. No sooner were these orders given, than the "imperialist" group, to describe them by a modern term, held a second meeting, in which it was resolved that their allegiance and duty were to the crown, that being already in practical possession of a rich strip of coast, and well received by the Indians, since they had proved their superiority, they should rather consider the conversion of the natives, and the extension of His Majesty's dominions, than the mere trading profits of the governor of Cuba, and hence that they should found there a port and city in the name of the sovereigns, who would certainly approve,

receiving from us the oath in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, with the solemnity customary in such cases; after which we assembled the next day in our council and assembly chamber, and, being thus assembled, we sent to summon the Captain Fernando Cortes, and we asked him in the name of Your Royal Highnesses to show us the powers and instructions, which the said Diego Velasquez had given him for coming to these parts. He immediately sent for these, and showed them to us, and, having been seen and read by us, and well examined according to the best of our understanding, it seemed to us that, by those powers and instructions, the said Captain Fernando Cortes, had no longer any authority, and that, they having expired, he could no longer exercise the office of justice, or of captain.

It seemed to us, Very Excellent Princes, that, for the sake of peace and concord amongst us, and in order to govern us well, it was necessary to install a person for

when they came to understand the circumstances. The Velasquez party seems to have offered no open resistance.

The elaborate name of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz was given to the new settlement, the "*rica*" being suggested by the rich character of the soil, and the "Vera Cruz" by the date of their landing, which was a Good Friday, the day when the Cross is especially venerated.

The transformation scene was very complete. Cortes, from being the semi-rebellious captain of a trading fleet became the recognised representative of the King of Spain in Mexico; the volunteer soldiers of the expedition became a militia; municipal officers, and royal officials sprang into existence, who acknowledged no superior but the King, while Diego Velasquez was eliminated from the scheme of things entirely.

The partisans of Velasquez, though in a minority, still argued that Cortes's election was irregular, because they had not taken part in it, nor had it been confirmed, either by the Jeronymite Fathers, or the governor of Cuba. This incipient sedition was characteristically met, by Cortes offering as many as were dissatisfied permission to re-embark, and return to Cuba, and, at the same time, to demonstrate the reality of the new state of things, he ordered the Alguacil Mayor to arrest Juan Velasquez, Diego de Ordaz, Pedro Escudero, and others of the more active agitators, and to imprison them on the captain's ship. This drastic move had the desired effect upon the waverers.

Your Royal service to act in the name of Your Majesties in the said town, and in these parts as Chief Justice, and Captain, and head, whom we could all respect and obey until we might give account of everything to Your Royal Highnesses, so that you could provide as best suited your service. Recognising that to no one could we better give such a charge than to the said Fernando Cortes, because, besides being a most suitable person, he is moreover very zealous in the service of Your Majesties, as well as being very experienced in these parts and islands, of which he has always given good proofs, for having spent all that he possessed to serve Your Majesties in this armada, and heeded so little (as we have already related) his possible gains and profits from continuing to trade, we therefore elected him, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, to the office of Justice and Superior Alcalde, receiving from him the oath which is required in such cases. And, having done this as profitable to the service of Your Majesty, we received him in Your Royal name in our Council and Assembly Chamber, as Chief Justice and Governor of Your Royal arms, and thus he is, and will continue, until Your Majesties provide what is best for your service.

We have wished to fully relate all this to Your Royal Highnesses, that you may know what has been done here, and in what condition we are living here.

Having done as stated, and, being all assembled in our Council Chamber, we agreed to write to Your Majesties, and to send you, in addition to the one-fifth part which belongs to your rents, according to Your Royal prescriptions, all the gold, and silver, and valuables which we have obtained in this country, on account of its being the first, and above which we keep nothing for ourselves. We place this at the disposition of Your Royal Highnesses, as a proof of our very good will for your service, as we have heretofore done with our persons and property,

and, having agreed upon this amongst ourselves, we selected as our procurators[1] Alonso Hernandez Portocarrero, and Francisco de Montejo, whom we send to Your Majesties with all this, that they may kiss Your Royal hands on our behalf, and that, in our names, and in that of this town, and its Council, they may pray Your Royal Highnesses to favour us as may be agreeable to God, and to Your Majesties, and for the coming good of this town, as will appear at greater length from the instructions which we have given them. We humbly beg Your Majesties, with all the respect which is becoming, to receive them, to give them Your Royal hands to kiss on our behalf, and to grant them all the favours they may ask and supplicate on behalf of this Council, and ourselves, because, in doing this Your Majesties, besides rendering service to Our Lord, and this town and Council, will bestow on us the special favour which we daily hope that Your Royal Highnesses will grant us.

Description of the Country

In one chapter of this letter, we have already said that we would send an account to Your Royal Highnesses, by which Your Majesties might be perfectly informed of everything about this country, its condition, riches, the people who possess it, and of the law and sect, rites and ceremonies which they observe. This country, Most Potent Princes, where we now are in the name of Your Majesties, has fifty leagues of coast on the one side and the other of this town, the seacoast being low with many sand-hills, some of which are two leagues or more in length. The country beyond these sand-hills is level, with many fertile plains, in which are such beautiful river banks, that in all Spain there can be found no better; these are as grateful to the sight as they are productive in everything sown in them, and very orderly and well kept with walks, and facilities for grazing all kinds

[1] See Appendix III. at close of Letter.

of animals. There is every kind of game in this country, and animals, and birds such as are familiar to us,—deer, fallow deer, wolves, foxes, quails, doves, and pigeons, and two or three kinds of hares and rabbits,—so that there is no difference between this country and Spain, as regards birds and animals; there are lions and tigers[1] about five leagues from the sea, in some places, and others are very beautiful [*word missing*]. There is, moreover, a great range of very beautiful mountains, some of them very high, amongst which one[2] very greatly exceeds all the others, and from it can be discovered and seen a great part of the sea and land; and it is so high that if the day is not very clear you cannot see or distinguish the summit of it, because one half of it is all covered with clouds; and sometimes when the day is very clear the peak of it can be seen above the said clouds, and it is so white that we judge it to be snow, and the natives even tell us that it is snow, but as we have not seen it well, although we have been very near to it, and because this region is so hot, we do not affirm it to be snow. We will endeavour to know and see it, as well as many other things about which we have information, so as to send a true account to Your Royal Highnesses of the wealth of gold and silver and stones, and we judge that Your Majesties may order it to be examined according to the samples of all which we remit to Your Royal Highnesses. According to our judgment, it is credible that there is everything in this country which existed in that from whence Solomon is said to have brought the gold for the

[1] The largest beasts of prey in Mexico were the puma, the jaguar, and the ocelot; lions and tigers there were none.

[2] Orizaba; the usual Indian name for the volcano was *Citlaltepetl*, meaning star-mountain, though they also called it *Zenctepatl*, and *Pojauhtecatl*. According to Humboldt, its known period of greatest activity was from 1545 to 1566; he also notes that both this crater, and that of Popocatepetl, incline towards the south-east. His measurement of Orizaba is 5395 metres (*Essai Politique*, vol. i.). Ferrer's measurement is 5450 metres.

Temple, but, as we have been here so short a time, we have not been able to see more than the distance of five leagues inland, and about ten or twelve leagues of the coast length on each side, which we have explored since we landed; although from the sea it must be more, and we saw much more while sailing.

Description of the Indians

The people who inhabit this country, from the Island of Cozumel, and the Cape of Yucatan to the place where we now are, are a people of middle size, with bodies and features well proportioned, except that in each province their customs differ, some piercing the ears, and putting large and ugly objects in them, and others piercing the nostrils down to the mouth, and putting in large round stones like mirrors, and others piercing their under lips down as far as their gums, and hanging from them large round stones, or pieces of gold, so weighty that they pull down the nether lip, and make it appear very deformed. The clothing which they wear is like long veils, very curiously worked. The men wear breech-cloths about their bodies, and large mantles, very thin, and painted in the style of Moorish draperies. The women of the ordinary people wear, from their waists to their feet, clothes also very much painted, some covering their breasts and leaving the rest of the body uncovered. The superior women, however, wear very thin shirts of cotton, worked and made in the style of *rochets*. Their food is maize and grain, as in the other Islands, and *potuyuca*, as they eat it in the Island of Cuba, and they eat it broiled, since they do not make bread of it; and they have their fishing, and hunting, and they roast many chickens, like those of the Tierra Firma, which are as large as peacocks. [1]

There are some large towns well laid out, the houses being of stone, and mortar when they have it. The

[1] These were turkeys, which were unknown in Europe

apartments are small, low, and in the Moorish style, and, when they cannot find stone, they make them of adobes, whitewashing them, and the roof is of straw. Some of the houses of the principal people are very cool, and have many apartments, for we have seen more than five courts in one house, and the apartments very well distributed, each principal department of service being separate. Within them they have their wells and reservoirs for water, and rooms for the slaves and dependents, of whom they have many. Each of these chiefs has at the entrance of his house, but outside of it, a large court-yard, and in some there are two and three and four very high buildings, with steps leading up to them, and they are very well built; and in them they have their mosques and prayer places, and very broad galleries on all sides, and there they keep the idols which they worship, some being of stone, some of gold, and some of wood, and they honour and serve them in such wise, and with so many ceremonies, that much paper would be required to give Your Royal Highnesses an entire and exact description of all of them. These houses and mosques, wherever they exist, are the largest and best built in the town, and they keep them very well adorned, decorated with feather-work and well-woven stuffs, and with all manner of ornaments. Every day, before they undertake any work, they burn incense in the said mosques, and sometimes they sacrifice their own persons, some cutting their tongues and others their ears, and some hacking the body with knives; and they offer up to their idols all the blood which flows, sprinkling it on all sides of those mosques, at other times throwing it up towards the heavens, and practising many other kinds of ceremonies, so that they undertake nothing without first offering sacrifice there.

They have another custom, horrible, and abominable, and deserving punishment, and which we have never be-

fore seen in any other place, and it is this, that, as often as they have anything to ask of their idols, in order that their petition may be more acceptable, they take many boys or girls, and even grown men and women, and in the presence of those idols they open their breasts, while they are alive, and take out the hearts and entrails, and burn the said entrails and hearts before the idols, offering that smoke in sacrifice to them.[1] Some of us who have seen this say that it is the most terrible and frightful thing to behold that has ever been seen. So frequently, and so often do these Indians do this, according to our information, and partly by what we have seen in the short time we are in this country, that no year passes in which they do not kill and sacrifice fifty souls in each mosque; and this is practised, and held as customary, from the Isle of Cozumel to the country in which we are now settled. Your Majesties may rest assured that, according to the size of the land, which to us seems very considerable, and the many mosques which they have, there is no year, as far as we have until now discovered and seen, when they do not kill and sacrifice in this manner some three or four thousand souls. Now let Your Royal Highnesses consider if they ought not to prevent so great an evil and crime, and certainly God, Our Lord, will be well pleased, if, through the command of Your Royal Highnesses, these peoples should be initiated and instructed in our Very Holy Catholic Faith, and the devotion, faith, and hope, which they have in their idols, be transferred to the Divine Omnipotence of God; because it is certain, that, if they served God with the same faith, and fervour, and diligence, they would surely work miracles.

Human Sacrifices

It should be believed, that it is not without cause that God, Our Lord, has permitted that these parts

[1] See Appendix IV. at close of Letter.

should be discovered in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, so that this fruit and merit before God should be enjoyed by Your Majesties, of having instructed these barbarian people, and brought them through your commands to the True Faith. As far as we are able to know them, we believe that, if there were interpreters and persons who could make them understand the truth of the Faith, and their error, many, and perhaps all, would shortly quit the errors which they hold, and come to the true knowledge; because they live civilly and reasonably, better than any of the other peoples found in these parts.

To endeavour to give to Your Majesties all the particulars about this country and its people, might occasion some errors in the account, because much of it we have not seen, and only know it through information given us by the natives; therefore we do not undertake to give more than what may be accepted by Your Highnesses as true. Your Majesties may, if you deem proper, give this account as true to Our Very Holy Father, in order that diligence and good system may be used in effecting the conversion of these people, because it is hoped that great fruit and much good may be obtained; also that His Holiness may approve and allow that the wicked and rebellious, being first admonished, may be punished and chastised as enemies of Our Holy Catholic Faith, which will be an occasion of punishment and fear to those who may be reluctant in receiving knowledge of the Truth; thereby, that the great evils and injuries they practise in the service of the Devil, will be forsaken. Because, besides what we have just related to Your Majesties about the men, and women, and children, whom they kill and offer in their sacrifices, we have learned, and been positively informed, that they are all sodomites, and given to that abominable sin.[1] In all this, we

[1] Clavigero denounces the blameworthy facility with which this vice was imputed to the Mexicans in general, by some of the early writers

beseech Your Majesties to order such measures taken as are most profitable to the service of God, and to that of Your Royal Highnesses, and so that we who are here in your service may also be favoured and recompensed.

Information Against Diego Velasquez

Amongst other things which are contained in our instructions to our procurators, whom we send to Your Highnesses, one is to pray Your Majesties on our own behalf, that you should in no way give, or make concession in these parts, to Diego Velasquez Lieutenant Admiral in the Island of Fernandina of the *adelantamiento*, nor the perpetual governorship, nor any other, nor the charge of justice; and if any such has been given to him, to order it to be revoked, because it is not profitable to the service of Your Royal Crown that the said Diego Velasquez, nor any other person, should have authority, or any other perpetual concession of any sort, save as may be the will of Your Majesties, in this country of Your Royal Highnesses, inasmuch as it is, as far as we can foresee and hope, very rich. Moreover, far from profiting Your Majesties' service, should the said Diego Velasquez be provided with some office, we foresee that we, the vassals of Your Royal Highnesses, who have begun to colonise, and to live in this country, will be ill-treated by him, because we are convinced that, what has already

and, in accord with other authorities, asserts that while it existed amongst the Panuchesi, the only evidence of it elsewhere was the severe laws enacted for its punishment. He does not hesitate to say, that the accusation was made by some of the Spaniards to palliate their own excesses,—a peculiarly heinous tactic. The friars, who were later in the best position to know the morals and customs of the Indians, unanimously repudiate the charge. Amongst modern authorities, Orozco y Berra combats the imputation as unfounded. Bernal Diaz records that obscene images were found in the temples at Cozumel, and the *Anonymous Conqueror* describes in language which I do not translate, the debauchery common amongst the Indians of Panuco, and gives some singular details of their different ways of intoxicating themselves, similar to nothing I have ever heard of amongst any people, ancient or modern (Apud Icazbalceta, *Doc. Ined. Il Modo di Sacrificare, etc.*).

been done in Your Majesties' service, in sending this gift of gold and silver, and valuables, which we have obtained here in this country, and now send, would not have been approved by him. This clearly appears through four of his servants who have come here, and who, when they perceived our wish to send all to Your Royal Highnesses, as we do, declared that it would be better to send it to Diego Velasquez, and otherwise opposed their being sent to Your Majesties. For this we ordered them to be imprisoned, and they will remain prisoners until justice decides, after which we shall relate to Your Majesties what we have done with them.[1] So, because we have seen what the said Diego Velasquez has done, and our experience of it, we fear that, if he should come to this country with any commission, he would treat us ill, as he has done in the Island of Fernandina, during the time that he had charge of its government, doing justice to none except as he pleased, and punishing those whom he chose, from anger or passion, but not from justice or reason. He has thus destroyed many good subjects by reducing them to great poverty, in refusing to give them any Indians, and taking them all

[1] Bernaldino de Coria, one of the conspirators, weakened at the last moment, and betrayed the plot to seize a boat, with provisions, and to put off to Cuba, for the purpose of warning Diego Velasquez of the sailing of the envoys, so that he might intercept them. Cortes did not mince matters; he promptly hanged Diego Cermeño, and Juan Escudero. The latter was the same alguacil who had captured him before the church in Santiago, where he had taken sanctuary during his quarrel with Velasquez, and had imprisoned him on the ship in the harbour. Gonzalo de Umbria had his feet cut off, and two hundred lashes were administered to each of the others, except the priest, Juan Diaz, whose cloth protected him. Gomara suppresses the amputation of Umbria's feet, and says he was whipped with the others. Bernal Diaz reports that Cortes exclaimed, when he signed the warrant for these punishments, "who would not rather be unable to write, than to have to sign away the lives of men!" but the old soldier shrewdly adds, that he believes most judges from the days of Nero down have expressed the same sentiment (Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. viii.).

for himself, and in taking all the gold which they had obtained without giving them any share of it. He also has interests with dishonest men, for his own advantage, and by the mere fact of his having the Governorship, and power of distribution, nobody dares to oppose him, knowing and fearing that he can ruin them. Your Majesties have no information about this, nor has there ever been any account made of it, because the procurators, who have gone heretofore from the said Island, are creatures and servants of his hands, whom he holds by giving them Indians at their pleasure; and the procurators, who come from the smaller towns to attend to the affairs of the communities, have to do as he wishes, because he buys them up with Indians. When such procurators return to their towns, and are asked to give an account of what they have done, the people declare that poor men should not be sent as procurators, because, for one cacique whom Diego Velasquez gives them, they will do everything he wants. The municipal officers and alcaldes who have Indians dare not speak to, or reprove, the procurators, who have done what they ought not to have done out of compliance to Diego Velasquez, for fear that the said Diego Velasquez might take away their Indians. In this, and other things, it is very good [*word missing in MS.*] from which Your Royal Highnesses may see, that all the accounts which the Island of Fernandina has made of what Diego Velasquez has done, and the favours which they asked for him, are on account of the Indians he has given to the procurators, and not because the communities are satisfied or wish such things; rather would they desire that those procurators were punished. The above being notorious to all the inhabitants and householders of this town of Vera Cruz, they assembled with the procurator of this council, and have asked and required us, by their requirements, signed with their names, that, in the name of all, we should beg

Your Majesties not to provide the said Diego Velasquez with the said, or any other, commission, but rather to order him to give his *residencia*,[1] and to deprive him of the charge of the Island of Fernandina. By taking his *residencia*, the above statements would be shown to be true, for which we beseech Your Majesties to name a judge and inquisitor, in order to make an investigation of all which we have related to Your Royal Highnesses, not only about the Island of Cuba, but also elsewhere; for our intention is to prove things from which Your Majesties may judge if it be justice or conscience that he should have royal charges in these parts, or in the others where he at present resides.

In the same manner, the procurator, and the inhabitants and householders of this town, have asked us in the said petition that we should supplicate Your Majesty in their name to provide a warrant and Royal Provision to be given in favour of Fernando Cortes, Captain, and Superior Justice of Your Royal Highnesses, in order that he may govern us with justice, until this country shall be conquered and pacified, and for such time as may appear best to Your Majesties, and be best for your service; for they recognise in him such a person as is fit for it. Which petition and requirement we send with these, our procurators, to Your Majesties, and we all humbly supplicate Your Royal Highnesses, that you will grant not only this, but all the other favours, which in the name of this council and town may be petitioned by the said procurators, and that you will regard us as your most

[1] This was done by means of a commission, with full powers to inquire into all administrative acts of a governor, and to receive and decide upon all complaints against him. Upon the arrival of the commissioners, the governor and his officials resigned their authority and badges of office into their hands, pending the outcome of the investigation. The *residencia* was not of itself an indignity, nor did it necessarily imply a want of confidence in the governor, but it was the most effective check the home government had upon the colonial officials.

loyal vassals, such as we have been and always will be. The gold, and silver, and jewels, and valuables, and the *rodelas*, and the wearing apparel, which we send by the procurators to Your Royal Highnesses, and which, over and above the one-fifth which belongs to Your Majesty, Captain Fernando Cortes, and this council, pray you to accept, go with this memorial, signed by them and by the said procurators, as Your Royal Highnesses may see from it.[1]

[1] The first treasure sent to Spain contained the following curious objects:

A gold necklace composed of seven pieces, with 185 small emeralds set in it, and 232 gems, like rubies, from which hung 27 small bells of gold, and some pearls.

Another necklace of four pieces of gold, with 102 red gems, like rubies, 172 emeralds, 10 fine pearls, set in it, and 26 little golden bells pendant.

Two wheels, one of gold representing the sun, the other of silver bearing the image of the moon, 28 hands in circumference, and bearing various figures of animals, and other devices, beautifully worked in relief.

A head-dress of wood, decorated with gold and gems, with 25 golden bells pendant; instead of a plume it had a green bird, whose eyes, beak, and feet, were of gold.

A gold bracelet; a small sceptre with two rings of gold, set with pearls at the ends.

Four tridents, tied with feathers of different colours, and pearl points tied with gold thread.

Several deerskin shoes, sewn with gold thread, and having soles of brilliant blue and white stones.

A shield of wood and leather, decorated with hanging bells of gold, and having gold plates in the centre, carved with the figure of the god of war, surrounded by four heads of a lion, a tiger, an eagle, and an owl, represented with their hair and feathers.

Several skins, tanned with the hair and feathers on them.

Twenty-four curious and beautiful golden shields, decorated with feathers and small pearls, four others of feathers and silver.

Four fish, two ducks, and other birds, made of gold.

Two sea-shells, imitated in gold, and a large crocodile, girt with golden threads.

A large mirror, and several small ones, of gold.

Several head-dresses, and crowns of feathers and gold, ornamented with pearls and gems.

From the Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz, on the tenth July, 1519.

Several large plumes of beautiful feathers, of various colours, spangled with gold and small pearls.

Several fans; some of gold and feathers, others of feathers alone, but all very rich.

A variety of cotton robes; some all white, others chequered white and black, or red, green, yellow, and blue, the outside being shaggy, and the inside smooth, without colour.

A number of coats, handkerchiefs, bedcovers, tapestries, and carpets of cotton stuffs.

There were several Mexican books, written in hieroglyphics, on their paper, which was about the consistency of light pasteboard. Peter Martyr describes them as folding tablets, and says of the writing, "*Sunt characteres a nostris valde dissimilis, Egypteas fere formas æmulantur*" (*De Insulis nuper inventis*).

Gomara says the paper was made of cotton, and a kind of gum, or paste; sometimes also of aloe leaves; Peter Martyr describes it as made of fine crushed bark, kneaded together with a gum.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

The first attack, of which Cortes makes no mention was made at Catoche, just before dawn, March 6th. The Indians fought with great fury, in spite of the fire-arms which they heard for the first time, and were repulsed only with difficulty, after they had wounded fifteen Spaniards. Bernal Diaz relates that fifteen Indians were killed, and two were captured, who were afterwards baptised Christians, under the name of Melchor, and Julian, by the chaplain Fray Alonzo Gonzalez. The Spaniards looted the temples and houses of their idols and golden ornaments. The Indians at Champoton repeated inquiringly the words "*Castelan? Castelan?*" and, by gestures, asked if the strangers came from the East. Orozco y Berra (vol. iv., cap. i.,) says that they connected the arrival of the unknown guests with the prophecy of Kukulcan (*Quetzalcoatl*), foretelling the coming of bearded white men from the land of the rising sun, and also that they had knowledge of Spaniards, from the time of the wreck of Valdivia's men, whom they had probably helped to sacrifice and eat.

The Spaniards passed an anxious night, listening to the noisy preparations of the Indians for battle, and in consulting vainly to discover some escape. At dawn, a hand-to-hand fight was fiercely waged, the Indians showing no fear of fire-arms, and driving the retreating Spaniards into the sea. Fifty Spaniards were killed, and one, Alonzo Bote, and a Portuguese, were captured alive. Bernal Diaz says that every soldier but one had from one to four wounds, for which the only dressing was fat taken from the dead Indians; he himself had three and Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba had twelve wounds. The name of *Mala Pelea* was given the place to commemorate this disaster.

The Spaniards found here the crosses which excited such interest and speculation that later a whole literature grew up to explain them. Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba had also seen crosses in Cozumel (Bernal Diaz, cap. iii., Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. viii.; Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. lii., Las Casas, *Hist. Apolog.*, cap. cxxv.).

The crosses found in various parts of Mexico were of several kinds. Those discovered in the western coast provinces, show a Buddhistic type, while those in the eastern parts are like either the simple Latin or Greek shapes. The cross at Metztitlan had the *Tau* form, while the famous one at Palenque presents no features by which it may be accurately classified, and has been thought to be an astronomical

sign, or an emblem of the four winds. That the cross was an object of cult amongst the Indians is certain, though there is much disagreement amongst authorities as to its origin, age, and significance. Bernal Diaz says that if it was of Christian origin and meaning, the natives had forgotten them, and Oviedo, who even regarded the existence of these crosses as a fable, maintained that if they did exist, and the Indians ever had known why they venerated them, they had long since lost, their knowledge. (Oviedo, lib. xvii., cap. viii.). Gomara described the cross seen at Cozumel as the rain-god, and said that quails were sacrificed before it (Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. liv.).

The cross was an instrument of punishment among the Egyptians, Persians, Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans, as also among Buddhist peoples. Hardly an ancient religion is found in which some form of cross does not appear as a symbol. Among the Aryan races, two crossed sticks were the emblem of the sacred fire, produced by friction called *pramatha*, from which comes the name Prometheus, of Vedic origin. The *Tau* borne by Isis, symbolised the rainy season (hence fertility) in Abyssinia, and, in the Egyptian cult, was the emblem of fecundation, (phallus of Osiris). Among the Jews, the cross had no sacred character, but was on the contrary, the vilest instrument of capital punishment.

APPENDIX II.

THIS "making a requirement" was at once a naive and arrogant formality by which the Spaniards sought to give legal sanction to their high-handed invasion and claims on the Indians' submission. By a bull dated May 4, 1493, Alexander VI. gave in donation to the Spanish sovereigns all lands which might be discovered in the new world, defined by a line drawn one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands. A convention was afterwards signed between Spain and Portugal at Tordesillas, removing the line seventy leagues further westward.

Martin V. had made a similar grant to the Portuguese in the East Indies in 1420, which was afterwards confirmed by Nicholas V. and Calixtus III. Orozco y Berra observes that, whatever may be thought to-day of such a concession, it is certain that it gave an undoubted right to the sovereigns thus favoured, which nobody, whether nation, king, or philosopher, disputed at that time. Pope Alexander's bull had the condition attached, that the natives of the countries discovered should be Christianised.

Such, therefore, was the high authority on which the "requirement" was based. The form of this document was invented, and drawn up, by Dr. Palacios Rubios, a jurisconsul, and member of the Royal Council, for the use of Pedrarias de Avila, coming afterwards to serve in the other colonies.

The requirement began thus: "On the part of the King Fernando, and of the Queen Doña Juana, his daughter, Queen of Castile, Leon, etc., rulers of the barbarous natives: we their servants notify and make it known, to you, as best we can, that the living and eternal God, our Lord, created the heavens and the earth, and a man and a woman, of whom you, and we, and all men in the world are descendants, as well as all who shall come after us. However, because of the multitude of generations issuing from these, in the five thousand years since the creation of the world, it was necessary that some should go one way, and some another, and that they should be divided into many kingdoms and provinces, as they could not maintain themselves in one. God, our Lord gave the charge of all these poeple to one called St. Peter, that he should be lord and superior over all men in the world, and that all should obey him, and that he should be the head of all the human race, and should love all men of whatsoever land, religion, and belief; and He gave him the world for his kingdom ordering his seat to be

placed in Rome, as the place best suited for ruling the world; but he was permitted also to establish his seat in any other part of the world, and to judge and govern all peoples, Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, and of whatsoever other sect or creed they might be!" etc. (Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., p. 86.).

The provisions of the bull giving the dominion over America to the Spanish sovereigns then followed.

The notary or clerk who accompanied the expedition read this unique document, indifferent to the fact that the Indians could not comprehend a word, even were they near enough to hear, and sometimes the reading would take place with no Indians at all present. All scruples were satisfied by this formality, and, if submission did not follow, the commander dealt with the natives as with obdurate rebels against the royal authority.

The way for the conquest was already prepared, and the Aztec historians, as well as the earliest Spanish authorities, record that, for a number of years, the belief that the hour of the Empire's dissolution was at hand had been steadily gaining ground, promoted by several events which were regarded as supernatural warnings of the approaching downfall. The lake of Texcoco had in 1510 risen suddenly, and inundated the city, without any visible cause or accompanying earthquake or tempest; one of the towers of the great teocalli was destroyed in 1511 by a mysterious conflagration, which resisted all efforts to extinguish it; comets, strange lights in the skies, accompanied by shooting stars, and weird noises, were all interpreted by the astrologers as portents of gloomy presage. The miraculous resurrection, three days after her death of Montezuma's sister, the Princess Papantzin who brought him a prophetic warning from her tomb, is reported at length by Clavigero (vol. i., p. 289). Legal proofs of this event, which occurred in 1509, were afterwards forwarded to the Spanish court. The princess is said to have lived many years, and to have been the first person to receive Christian baptism which she did in Tlatelolco, in 1524, being henceforth known as Doña Ana Papantzin, Her life became a model of Christian virtue. Whatever may have been the exact nature of this occurrence, the reported miracle doubtless rests upon some fact which was interpreted by the Mexicans as supernatural.

APPENDIX III.

The messengers carried also the first letter of Cortes, which has never since been found. It could not have differed essentially from the letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz, as the one was intended to confirm the other. Bernal Diaz says that Cortes's letter made no mention of the discoveries of Cordoba, and Grijalba, and that he wished all such to be suppressed in the collective letter, though he was satisfied with its references to himself. After assisting at a mass, said by Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo, the two envoys sailed on July 16, 1519, and they took with them the royal fifth of all the gold, besides the other treasures which Cortes had induced the men to surrender, in order to make up an imposing gift to the Emperor. By Bernal Diaz, the sailing date is once given as the 16th of July, and in another place as the 6th; Gomara gives the 26th. They were enjoined to sail by the channel of the Bahamas, and to avoid Cuba, but they disobeyed this warning, and stopped several days at Marien, where Montejo had a property near by. They renewed their supplies at this place, and showed some of the treasure to a servant, besides which, Montejo also wrote to a former overseer of his, Juan de Reja, who had meanwhile passed into Diego Velasquez's service, and as through him the governor learned of what was happening, he promptly dispatched a vessel to overhaul the messengers, and bring them back; but he was too late. The envoys landed, early in October, 1512, but Benito Martin, a friend and agent of Velasquez's, was already advised of their coming, and lodged a complaint with the *Casa de Contractacion* in Seville, in which he described Cortes as a rebel against his superior's authority, and asked for the arrest of the envoys, and the sequestration of the letters, and the treasure. He found a ready ally in Rodriguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, who was omnipotent as President of the Royal Council for the Indies, a warm friend and supporter of Velasquez's, with whose family his own was about to be connected by a marriage.

Peter Martyr, who was then at Court, and noted every circumstance of interest, mentions the arrival of the two envoys in December as "recent," which might mean that he had only recently heard of it. All authorities agree that they got a rough reception from the Bishop of Burgos, and saw the Emperor only in March, 1520, after many difficulties. This audience was at Tordesillas, where His Majesty was then paying a visit to his mother, Doña Juana, before proceeding

to Santiago de Compostella. Bernal Diaz would seem to be the original authority for the erroneous statement that Charles V. was in Flanders at this time, which has been repeated by many later historians. Charles had arrived in Spain in Nov. 1517. Peter Martyr, however, says that the Emperor had then already seen the gold and presents from Mexico, which confirms another authority, who states that while they were stopped by the Bishop in Seville, Martin Cortes, the father of Fernando, and an official of the Royal Council, who was friendly, one Nuñez contrived to forward duplicates of the despatches to the Emperor, and a memorial describing the Bishop of Burgos's behaviour, and the sequestration of the treasures. The Emperor was well impressed by the letters, and ordered the gifts to be sent on to him. He was, however, so absorbed with business of importance, prior to quitting the country for Germany to assume the imperial crown, that he left without giving a decision. The envoys followed him to La Coruña and there exists, in the archives of Simancas, the deposition given under oath before Dr. Carbajal, member of the Royal Council for the Indies, by Francisco Fernandez Puertocarrero, dated, Coruña, April 30, 1520, copied by Prescott, Appendix VII. The memorial of Benito Martin is found, according to Prescott, in the collection of MSS., made by Don Vargas Ponce, sometime president of the Academy of History.

APPENDIX IV.

HUMAN sacrifices were very general among all the Mexican tribes, at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, and the description here given of the horrible temple rites is in no way exaggerated, but is indeed rather meagre. The practice is traced, by some historians, to the tribe of the Mexi, which descended from Tenoch, son of Iztacmixcoatl, the progenitor of the Nahoa family, but, with what justice, does not clearly appear, as this people may have received it from some tribe or race preceding, or allied, to them. Prisoners taken in war were the most highly prized victims, but failing these, or for the celebration of minor festivals, slaves were easily bought, or were offered by their owners for the purpose. Small infants were also commonly sold by their mothers, and instances of free-born men offering themselves as victims, for one motive or another, were not unknown. The victims were frequently drugged, in such wise that they went unconsciously, or even willingly to the altar. If a great festival, requiring many, and choice, victims, fell in a time of peace, war would be undertaken upon any frivolous pretext, in order to procure the desired offerings.

The rites were carefully prescribed, and were of the most solemn description. Different kinds of sacrificial stones were used for different classes of victims; the usual one called *techcatl* is described by Veladés (*Rhetorica Christiana*) as "*Mensa quadrata magna non et splendida habent singula latera longitudinem trium ulnarum non absimilis lapideis illis quæ inter Romana monumenta ad hunc servantur.*"

This table-shaped stone was about waist high, and stood as an inverted pyramid. Six priests officiated, five of whom held the arms, legs, and head, of the victim, who was stretched upon the stone in such wise as to throw his chest well forward. These five had their faces and bodies painted black, with a white line around the mouth; their hair was bound up with a leather band, and ornamented with tufts of coloured papers; their vestment was a white dalmatic, striped with black.

The sixth priest was the celebrant whose vestment varied according to the feast, or the deity, to be propitiated. His head was adorned with coloured plumes, and in his ears were golden ornaments, set with green stones, while a blue stone was set in his under lip. Pronouncing the words of the ritual, he plunged a sharp knife, made of silex, into the victim's breast, and, quickly thrusting his hand into the opening,

tore out the beating heart, which he first elevated, and then deposited at the feet of the image of the god. Sometimes the heart was placed in a vase, and left standing on the altar, or it might be buried, or preserved with divers ceremonies, as a relic, or it might be eaten by the priests; the fresh blood was smeared on the lips of the idols. If the victim were a prisoner taken in battle, his head was given to the priests, to be kept as a trophy, the entrails were fed to the dogs, and the other parts of the body were cooked with maize, and offered in small pieces to the guests invited to partake by the giver of the sacrificial feast.

The warrior who had captured the victim in battle could not eat of the latter's flesh, as a sort of spiritual relationship was held to exist between them, not dissimilar to that of a sponsor and his god-child in Christian baptism, or even closer, for the flesh of the victim was considered also as the very flesh of the captor. The eating of this human body was not an act of gluttonous cannibalism alone, but was believed to have mystic significance, the flesh having undergone some mysterious transmutation, by virtue of the sacrificial rite, and to be really consecrated; it was spoken of also, as the true body of the deity, to whom it was offered, and, also, as the "food of soul." None but chiefs, and distinguished persons, specially designated, were permitted to partake of the sacramental feast, which was celebrated with much ceremony and gravity. If the victim were a slave, the rites were similar, but simpler. Orozco y Berra, in the first, and the third volumes of his authoritative work, gives the fullest, and most interesting information on human sacrifices amongst the Mexicans.

SECOND LETTER

SECOND LETTER

Sent to his Sacred Majesty, the Emperor of Our Realm, by the Captain-General of New Spain, called Don Fernando Cortes, in which he gives an account of the countries and innumerable provinces which he has discovered in Yucatan, from the year 1519 to the present time, and has subjected to the Crown of His Royal Majesty. He makes special relation of a very great, and very rich, province called Culua, in which there are many great cities, and marvellous edifices, having much commerce and wealth. Amongst these there is one more marvellous and richer than all the others, called Temixtitan, which by marvellous art has been built on a great lake; of which city and province, a very great lord, called Montezuma, is king; in which, things, frightful to be heard, were suffered by the Captain, and the Spaniards. He describes at length the vast dominion of the said Montezuma, and its customs and ceremonies, and how he is served.

Very Great and Powerful, and Very Catholic Prince, Most Invincible Emperor, Our Lord. In a ship, which I despatched from this Your Sacred Majesty's New Spain, on the sixteenth of July 1519, I sent to Your Royal Highness a very long and particular account of everything which had happened from the time of my arrival here until that time; this said account was taken by Alonzo Hernandez Puertocarrero, and Francisco de Montejo, procurators of the Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz, which I had founded in the name of Your Royal Highness.

Having had no opportunity since then, not only for the want of ships, and being myself occupied in the conquest and pacification of this country, but also because nothing has been heard of the said ships and the procurators, I have related nothing more to Your Majesty concerning what has since been done. God knows the pain which this has caused me, for I have wished that Your Highness should understand the affairs of this country, which is so great and important, since, as I have already said in my other account, it is no less worthy to warrant your assuming anew the title of Emperor, than is Germany, of which, by the grace of God, Your Sacred Majesty already possesses the title.

It would entail going on indefinitely, were I to attempt to tell Your Highness all the particulars, and everything relating to these parts and new kingdoms, and everything in them worthy to be told; I beg Your Sacred Majesty to hold me pardoned, if I do not give so full an account to Your Highness as I ought, because neither my ability, nor my opportunity at this time, favour my doing so. I shall, nevertheless, endeavour to tell Your Highness the truth in the best manner possible, and what, for the present, is necessary that Your Majesty should know; and I must likewise crave Your Highness's pardon if I do not recount all that is necessary, the precise when and how, and if I should not specify some names, not only of cities and towns, but also of provinces which, giving themselves for your subjects and vassals, have offered their allegiance to Your Majesty. This I beg, because, in a certain recent misfortune, of which I will hereafter in this writing give a full account to Your Highness, I have lost all my papers, and the official agreements, which I had made with the natives of this country, besides many other things.

In my other account, Most Excellent Prince, I told Your Majesty of all the cities and towns which until then

had offered themselves to your royal service, and which I held subjugated and conquered for you. I also mentioned that I had information of a great lord called Montezuma,[1] of whom the natives of this country had told me, and who lived, according to their computation of distances, about ninety or a hundred leagues from the coast and port where I had disembarked; and that,

[1] Muteczuma, Motezuma, Motecuhzoma are some of the various forms used, but, amongst the several spellings of the Aztec sovereign's name, it seems simpler to adopt the one sanctioned by the best English and American usage—Montezuma.

Montezuma Xocoyotzin was one of the six sons of the King Axayacatl (A.D. 1469–81), and was unanimously chosen by the electors to succeed his uncle, Ahuitzotl, from amongst the eligible princes, who, in that instance, were his own five brothers, and the seven sons of the deceased emperor. Montezuma II assumed the appellation of "*Xocoyotzin*" upon his accession, signifying "younger," to distinguish him from the elder Montezuma, Ilhuicamina. Prescott gives his age as twenty-three at the time of election, but I prefer to follow the authority of the Tezozomoc MS., given in Orozco y Berra, which states that he was born in 1486 and was hence thirty-four years old.

His early career was that of a successful soldier, from which he passed into the priesthood, rising to the grade of a pontiff. At that time he was held in great veneration by the people, as one who received revelations from the gods, and his strict life was a model to his fellows. It is related that, when the news of his election to the imperial throne was brought to him, he was found sweeping the steps of the temple whose altars he served. His temperament was theocratic; he ruled sternly, and ill-brooked opposition, or even counsel, but he was princely in recompensing faithful service. He had embellished his capital, but the liberality which built an aqueduct, a hospital, and new temples in the city, cost the subject provinces dear, and Montezuma being both despotic and a heavy tax-levier, was more feared than loved by his people and allies. Loving order, he understood the science of government, but his finer qualities were marred by his inordinate pride, and most of all by the ferocious superstition which finally lost him his throne and his life. The policy he adopted with Cortes was fatal, and shows us the pitiful figure of the monarch struggling, not against the power of an invading force, but taken in the coils of his own superstition, and reduced to a humble suppliant, offering rich bribes to the man he could have annihilated. The treasures he thus incautiously exposed, argued the existence of still greater in reserve, and whetted the Spaniard's craving for more.

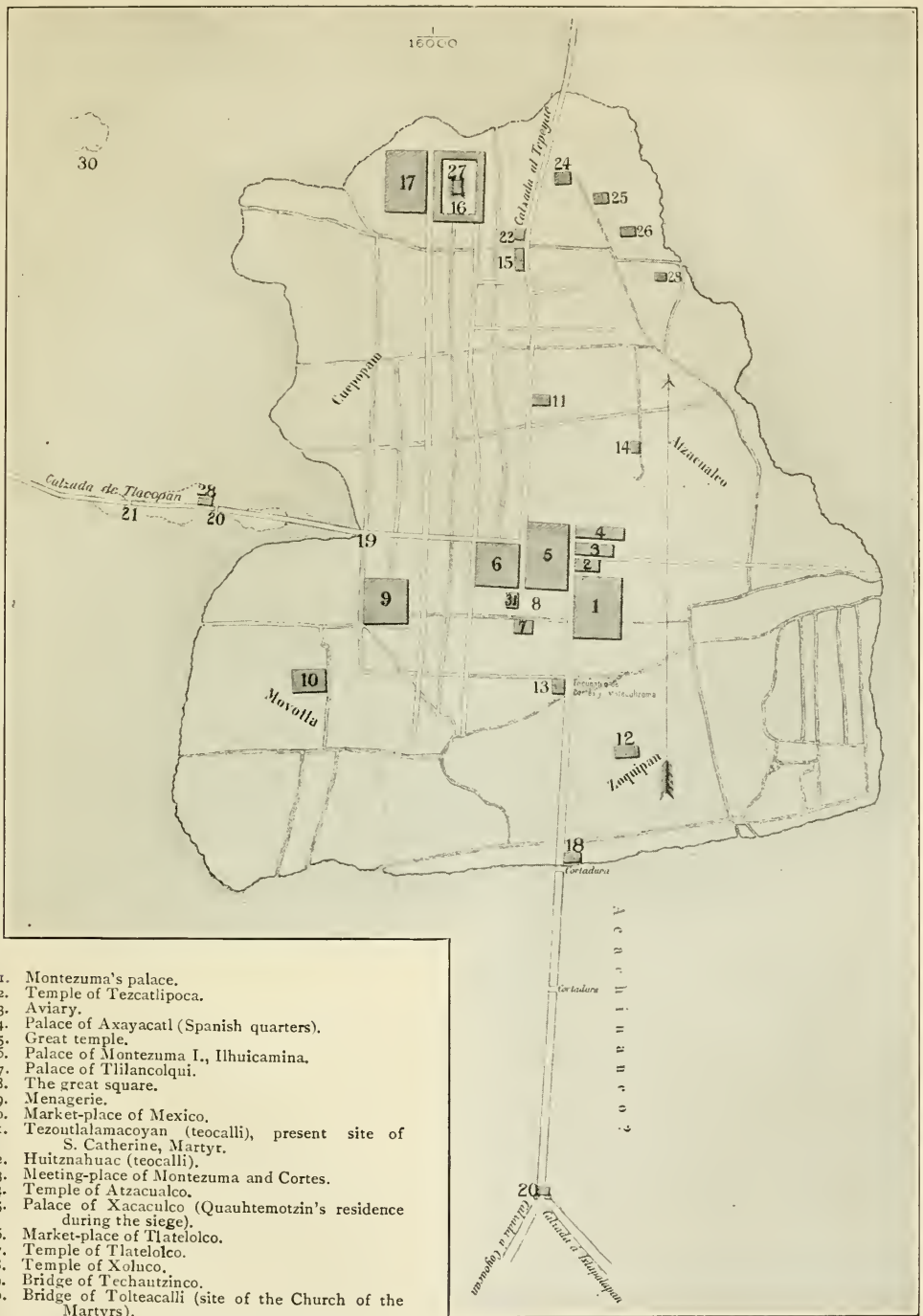
An account of Montezuma's death will be found in a later note.

confiding in the greatness of God, and relying on the power of Your Highness's Royal name, I had decided to go and see him, wherever he might be. I even remember that I offered, so far as this lord was concerned, to accomplish the impossible, for I vowed to Your Royal Highness, that I would have him prisoner, or dead, or subject to the Royal Crown of Your Majesty.

Cortes Begins his March to Mexico

With this purpose and determination, I left the city of Cempoal,[1] which I had named Seville, on the sixteenth of August, with fifteen horsemen, and three hundred foot soldiers, all equipped for war, as best I was able, and as time permitted. I left in the town of Vera Cruz, two horsemen, and one hundred and fifty men, engaged in building a fort, which I have now almost finished, and I left all that province of Cempoal, and all the neighbouring mountain regions near the said town, which contained some fifty thousand warriors, and fifty towns and forts, all well pacified, and secure, and very devoted as loyal vassals of Your Majesty, such as they have been, and are, until now. According to my information, they were subjects of that lord, Montezuma, by force, and since a short time only, and, when they learned from me of Your Highness's great and royal power, they declared they wished to become vassals of Your Royal Majesty, and my friends, and they prayed me to protect them against that great lord, who held them subject by force and tyranny, and took away their sons, to kill and sacrifice them to their idols; and making many other complaints against him. Thus, they are, and have continued, very firm and loyal in the service of Your Highness, and I believe they will

[1] Cempoal. Found with many variations of spelling such as Cenipoal, Cempoalla, Zempoala, etc. The town was situated between the two rivers Chatcalacac and Actopan, a little more than a league from the sea. It was a well built town in the midst of a fertile country, four leagues from Vera Cruz; and still preserves its Indian name. A Spanish lad of twelve was left at Cempoal to learn the language.



1. Montezuma's palace.
2. Temple of Tezcatlipoca.
3. Aviary.
4. Palace of Axayacatl (Spanish quarters).
5. Great temple.
6. Palace of Montezuma I., Ilhuicamina.
7. Palace of Tlilancolqui.
8. The great square.
9. Menagerie.
10. Market-place of Mexico.
11. Tezoutlalamacoyan (teocalli), present site of S. Catherine, Martyr.
12. Huitznahuac (teocalli).
13. Meeting-place of Montezuma and Cortes.
14. Temple of Atzacualco.
15. Palace of Xacaculco (Quauhtemotzin's residence during the siege).
16. Market-place of Tlatelolco.
17. Temple of Tlatelolco.
18. Temple of Xoluco.
19. Bridge of Techautzinco.
20. Bridge of Tolteacalli (site of the Church of the Martyrs).
21. Bridge of Toltecaacaplan (Alvarado's leap).
22. Audience hall (present church of Santa Ana).
23. Temple of Cihuatecpan or Xochotilla (present S. Francisco).
24. Temple of Coyonacazco also called Amaxac.
25. Tetinantitech; final stand of the Mexicans, where the present Church of the Conception stands.
26. Temple of Apahuaztlan.
27. Temple of Nomoxco.
28. Temple of Petlacalli.
29. Fortress of Xoloc.
30. Nonohualco.
31. Cuicacolco (teocalli).

PLAN OF MEXICO TENOCHTITLAN

From *Conquista de Mexico*, vol. iv., by Orozco y Berra

always remain so, not only to escape from his tyranny, but also because they have always been well treated and favoured by me. For the greater security of those who remained at Vera Cruz I brought some of their principal men, and some of their people with me, who have been not a little useful to me on the road.

I believe I have already written to Your Majesty, in my first account, that some of my company, who had been servants and friends of Diego Velasquez, were vexed by what I had accomplished in the service of Your Highness, and some of them even wanted to rebel, and desert me in the country; especially four Spaniards who were called Juan Escudero, Diego Cermeño, a pilot, Gonzalo de Ungria, also a pilot, and Alonzo Peñate. These, as they voluntarily confessed, had determined to seize a brigantine, then in the port, with a certain quantity of bread and meat, to kill the master of it, and return to the island of Fernandina, that they might report to Diego Velasquez that I was sending to Your Royal Highness the ship, which I sent with what it contained, and the course it would take. This was to enable the said Diego Velasquez to put ships on guard, for the purpose of capturing it, as he did when he afterwards came to know it, for, as I was informed, he sent a caravel after the said ship, which would have been captured, if it had not already passed. And they likewise confessed, that other persons shared the same wish to warn the said Diego Velasquez. Having seen the confessions of these delinquents, I punished them according to justice, and as it seemed to me the needs of the times, and the interests of Your Royal Highness's service demanded.

Besides those, who acted thus because they were servants and friends of Diego Velasquez, there were others who wanted to leave on seeing how large and populous the country was, while the Spaniards were so few. Believing

Destruction of the Fleet

that, if I left the ships there, they would revolt with them, and, all those of like mind deserting, I would be left almost alone, by which the great service which I had rendered to God and Your Highness in this country would be undone, I determined, on the pretext that they were unseaworthy, to have the said ships beached.[1] Thus, everybody lost hope of ever leaving the country, and I set out on my march, securely, without fear that, when I turned my back, the people whom I had left in the town would fail me.

Eight or ten days after having beached the ships, and when I had gone to the city of Cempoal, which is about four leagues distant, whence to continue my march, they brought me news in that town, that four ships were running along the coast, and that the captain, whom I had left there, had gone out to them in a boat. I had

[1] The destruction of the ships is one of the most dramatic episodes in the eventful history of the conquest, and Cortes, in reporting it to the Emperor, assumes exclusively the credit of the heroic decision and its execution, but throughout his narrative he is chary of ever mentioning anybody but himself. Gomara naturally gives the same account and Prescott accepts his version, as do other reputable historians. Bernal Diaz, who figures always as the great objector and corrector, contradicts this account very positively, and says that the destruction of the ships was decided upon after a general discussion, and that Cortes was unwilling to accept any responsibility either for their demolition or for their cost if there should later arise a necessity to pay for them to their rightful owners. He refutes with emphatic scorn Gomara's assertion that Cortes feared to tell the soldiers of his intention to push into the interior in search of the great Montezuma, exclaiming: "What sort of Spaniards are we, not to want to push ahead, but to stop where we had no hardships or fighting!" The *Relacion* of Andres de Tapia (who was also an eye-witness) agrees with Bernal Diaz. Puertocarrero replied in La Coruña in the same sense as his companion Montejo (April 29, 1520), stating that the proposal to destroy all but three of the ships came from the captains of them, who declared them to be unseaworthy, and even the three to be of doubtful value. Puertocarrero and Montejo sailed, as has been said, on July 16th, with the treasure and the letters which were dated July 10th, so that the discovery of the conspiracy, and the punishment of its authors, and the destruction of the ships, all took place in those six days.

been told that they belonged to Francisco de Garay,[1] Lieutenant, and Governor of the Island of Jamaica, and had come to make discoveries. My captain had told them, that I had already settled the country in the name of Your Highness, and had laid out a town about a league from where the said ships were, where they could go and make their arrival known to me, and there make any repairs they might need. He said he would conduct them in his barque to the port, pointing out to them where it was. They had answered him, that they had already seen the port, having passed in front of it, and that they would do as he said, so he had returned with the barque, but the ships had not followed him nor come to the port. They had still sailed along the coast, and, as they had not entered the port, he did not know what object

Clavigero believes that Cortes induced some of the pilots to scuttle one or two of the ships, and to then come to him representing the others as unseaworthy from being three months in port.

Señor Orozco y Berra is doubtless right in believing that the idea of destroying the ships originated with Cortes, who adroitly suggested it in such wise, and with such arguments, that it came back to him as a spontaneous proposal from the others, prompted, or at least supported by the opinions of the pilots and ship-captains that the vessels were unsound. Such artifice was not alien to his diplomacy, for he usually contrived that he should appear to interpret the popular will as well as to serve the royal interests in all his undertakings.

[1] Francisco de Garay sailed with Columbus on his second voyage. Las Casas speaks of his great wealth, and says that he had five thousand Indians solely to look after his pigs. He went to Spain as procurator for San Domingo, and returned as Lieut-Governor of Jamaica. When the news of the Cordoba and Grijalba expeditions became the excitement of the day, Garay sent out an exploring party under command of Diego de Camargo. This discovered the Panuco region, and, continuing thence about one hundred leagues towards Florida, finally returned to Jamaica. The Emperor Charles V. granted him faculties for further enterprises, and the title of adelantado of the new countries he discovered. Garay was one of the most cruel oppressors of the Indians and it was said of him that he came, not to populate, but to *depopulate*, Jamaica. This expedition, of which Cortes writes, was composed of four ships carrying two hundred and seventy men, with horses and cannon, and had sailed from Jamaica towards the close of 1518, under command of Alonzo Alvarez de Piñeda.

they had in view. Within an hour after hearing what the said captain made known to me, I left for Vera Cruz, where I learned that the ships were anchored about three leagues down the coast, and that no one had landed. I then went along the coast with some people, to reconnoitre, and, when I was about one league from the ships, I met three men from them, amongst whom there was one who called himself a notary public, who told me he had brought the other two as witnesses to a certain notification and requirement with which he said their captain had ordered him to serve me on his behalf, and which he had brought with him. They desired to make it known to me, that he had discovered that country, and wished to settle in it, for which reason he required me to define the boundaries with him, as he wished to make his settlement down the coast five leagues below Nautical,[1] which is a city now called Almeria, twelve leagues from Vera Cruz. I answered that their captain should come with his ships to the port of Vera Cruz, where we could talk, and I would learn his intentions, and, if his ships and people needed anything, I would help them with what I could. Inasmuch as he said that he had come in the service of Your Sacred Majesty, I only desired that occasion should be given me to serve Your Highness, and, in helping him, I believed that I would do this. They replied, that neither the captain, nor any of his people, would on any account land anywhere that I might be.

Believing that they must have done some harm in the country, inasmuch as they were afraid to come before me, when night came on I hid myself near the coast, opposite to where the said ships were anchored. There I remained concealed until the next day about noon, expecting the captain or his pilot to come on shore, from

[1] The present Nautla in the state of Vera Cruz; Piñeda named it Almeria.

whom I would learn what they had been doing, and where they had been, intending, that if they had done any harm in the country, to send them to Your Sacred Majesty; but neither they nor anyone else ever landed. Seeing that they did not come, I made some of my Spaniards put on the clothes of those who had come to make me the requirements, and directed them to go to the beach, and signal to those on board the ships. As soon as these were observed by those on board, a barque, carrying some ten or twelve men, armed with arquebuses and muskets, came towards the land. The Spaniards who were calling from the shore retired from the beach to some bushes near by, as if to take shelter in their shade, and thus four landed, two men with arquebuses, and two with muskets. These were surrounded, and taken prisoners by the people whom I had placed on the beach. One of the captives, the master of the ship, tried to fire his weapon, and would have killed my captain of Vera Cruz, but that, by Our Lord's will, the fuse did not burn. Those who had remained in the boat, put to sea, but before they could reach their ships, sail had been set, without waiting, or troubling to hear anything about them.

I learned from my prisoners, how they had arrived at a river,[1] which is some thirty leagues down the coast, after passing Almeria, and had had a good reception there from the natives, and had traded for some provisions, and seen some gold which the Indians wore, although it was scarce, that they had obtained by trading, as much as [three thousand *castellanos*[1] worth of gold, and that they had not landed, but had seen certain towns on the banks of the river so near, that they could distinguish them well from the ships, and that there were no buildings of stone, the houses being of thatch, but very high and well built. All this I knew more fully afterwards, through

[1] The Panuco.

[2] The *castellano* was equivalent to $1.167.

that great lord Montezuma, and from certain interpreters from that country whom he had about him.

I took these men, and an Indian whom they had brought in their ships from the said river, and sent them, with other messengers of the said Montezuma, to the lord of that river, called Panuco, to win him to Your Sacred Majesty's service. With them, he sent me back a chief who, it was said, was chief of a town, who brought me on behalf of his lord certain stuffs, and stones, and feathers, telling me that he and all his people would be very happy to become vassals of Your Majesty, and my friends. I in turn presented them with some things from Spain, which so satisfied him, that, when some other ships of the said Francisco de Garay arrived (of which I will make relation to Your Highness hereafter), the said Panuco sent me word that those ships were in another river, some five or six days' journey from that place, asking that I should tell him whether those who had come in them belonged to me, so that he might give them whatever they needed, and that he already had sent some women and chickens and other provisions. I marched, Very Powerful Lord, three days through the country and lordship of Cempoal, where I was well received, and entertained by the natives, and, on the fourth day, I arrived in the province called Sienchimalen,[1] where there is a very strong town ably fortified. It is situated on the side of a steep mountain slope, and is approached by a single pass of steps, by which it is impossible to enter except on foot, and even thus with great difficulty, if the natives wished to defend it.

Negotiations with the Cacique of Panuco

In the plains, there are many hamlets and villages, with five, three, and two hundred families, which will furnish altogether some five or six thousand warriors; and they are subject to the rule of Montezuma. Here, they

[1] Xochimilco was the correct name; it is now called Xico.

received me very well, and courteously gave me the necessary provisions for my march, saying that they knew very well I was going to see Montezuma their lord, and that I might rest assured he was my friend, for he had ordered them, in every case, to give me a good reception, as by so doing they would render him a service. I thanked them for their courtesy, saying that Your Majesty already knew of Montezuma, and had ordered me to visit him.

I next crossed a pass, which is at the end of this province, and to which we gave the name of Puerto del Nombre de Dios,[1] on account of its being the first we have traversed in this country. So steep, and so high, is it, that in all Spain there is none so difficult. I passed with entire safety, and without any opposition, and, on the descent of the said pass, there are other hamlets belonging to a town and fort, called Ceycocnacan,[2] which also belongs to Montezuma. Here we were as well received as we had been at Sienchimalen, and the people repeated what the others had told us of Montezuma's good will, and I satisfied them in the same manner.

Thence I travelled three days through a desert, which, on account of its sterility, and want of water, and the very great cold which prevails, is uninhabitable; where God knows all the trouble which the men suffered from hunger and thirst, especially from tempests of hail and rain which overtook us, making me fear that many people would die of cold; and certain Indians from the Island of Fernandina did die, because they were ill-clad. At the end of these three days, we traversed another pass,[3] although not so steep as the first one, on the top of which was a small tower like an oratory, where were kept certain

[1] Now called Paso del Obispo.

[2] Another name which is spelled according to the caprice of each writer; its proper name was Ixhuacan, now spelled Ishuacan, and the tower is some ten leagues from Xalapa.

[3] Identified, with probability, as the Sierra del Agua.

idols, and around the tower were more than a thousand loads of cut wood, very well piled up, so we named it the Paso de la Leña. On the descent of the said pass, between some very rough mountain chains, there is a very populous valley, the people of which seem to be poor.

After having marched about three leagues through the settlement without seeing anything of them, I arrived at a somewhat more level place, where it seemed the chief of that valley lived, and which had the largest and best built houses we had till then seen in this country, for they were of hewn stone, quite new, and had very large and beautiful rooms, and many well-arranged apartments. This valley and its people are called Caltanmi.[1] I was very well received, and lodged by the chief and his people. After having spoken to him on the part of Your Majesty, and told him the cause of my coming to these parts, I asked him if he also was a vassal of Montezuma's, or if he belonged to some other dominion. He, wondering at what I asked him, answered me, "And who is not a vassal of Montezuma's?" as much as to say that he was the sovereign of the world. I then replied, and told him about the vast power and jurisdiction of Your Majesty, and of all the many and greater lords than Montezuma who were vassals of Your Highness, even considering it as no small privilege to be so, as would Montezuma, and all the natives of these parts, likewise have to be; and thus I required him to be because he would then be much honoured and favoured, while on the contrary if he were unwilling to obey he would be punished. In recognition of his vassalage, I asked him to give me some gold to be sent to Your Majesty, when he answered that he had

[1] The name of the valley was Caltanmic, and that of the town, Xocotla; its chief, Olintetl, was so enormous that he had to be supported when he walked. The Spaniards named him the "trembler." There was a strong Mexican garrison at Xocotla, as it was a fortified place on the frontiers of hostile Tlascala.

gold, but would not give it unless Montezuma commanded him to do so, but that, if the latter did so order, then he would give the gold, and his person, and all that he possessed. In order not to scandalise him, nor to hinder my designs and progress, I dissembled with him the best I could, saying that very soon Montezuma would order him to give the gold and everything he had.

The two other chiefs who had lands in this valley came to see me here, one of whom lived four leagues below, and the other two leagues above, and they gave me certain collars of gold of little weight or value, and seven or eight female slaves.

After stopping four or five days there, I left them very contented, and went to the city of the other chief, two leagues, as I said, up the valley which place is called Yztacmastitan.[1] This lordship has an extension of three or four leagues, one house after another along the valley, and on the banks of a small river which flows through it. The house of the chief stands on a very high hill, protected by a better fort than can be found in half Spain, well surrounded with walls, and barbicans, and moats, and, on the top of this hill, there is a town of about five or six thousand inhabitants, with very large houses, whose people are somewhat richer than those of the lower valley. Here I was also very well received, and its chief told me that he likewise was a vassal of Montezuma. I stayed in his house three days, not only for the purpose of resting the people from the hardship they had endured in the desert, but also to wait for four messengers, natives of Cempoal, who had come with me, and whom I had sent from Caltanmi to a very large province called Tascalteca,[2]

[1] Ixtacmaxtitlan, in the present state of Puebla. For convenience' sake the town was removed from the hill-top in 1601 and built on its present site lower down.

[2] Tlascala was a republic composed of four federated states, each ruled by its chief, while federal affairs and legislation were undertaken by the Senate, which was composed of the nobles of all four states,

which they told me was very near there, as in truth it was. They had also told me, that the natives of this province were their friends, and very deadly enemies of Montezuma, and that they wished me to confederate with them, as they were a large and powerful people (whose country was bounded on all sides by that of the said Montezuma, with whom they were in continual warfare), and would be glad to help me if the said Montezuma should oppose me. These messengers did not return during all the time that I remained in that valley, which was in all eight days. I asked the others, who had come with me from Cempoal, how it was that the messengers did not return, and they answered that it was a great distance, and that they could not get back so quickly. Seeing that their return was delayed, and that the chiefs of Cempoal were so positive about the friendship and fidelity of the people of that province, I set out for it.

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and their over-lords. The city was likewise divided into four districts, in which people of the separate tribes lived, each under its own chief. As the country was hemmed in on all sides by the Aztec Empire, there was no commerce, and the chief pursuit was agriculture. The Tlascalans were a brave, hardy, and war-like people, well advanced in military science, and having something very like a feudal system of chivalry, in that the different chiefs or lords had each his own standard and crest, and the soldiers were uniformed in their leaders' colours and owed him allegiance; Xicotencatl's. device was a white heron on a rock. There were also orders of knighthood conferred for bravery. Their important part in the conquest is noticed elsewhere, and will also appear in the course of Cortes's own narration. One of his first desires was to force Christianity upon them, but Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo wisely restrained his untimely zeal, and, beyond explaining the Christian doctrines, no constraint was attempted. The Tlascalans conceded that the Christian God must very likely be a good one, and they were ready to admit him to a place in their own pantheon, something after the manner of the Emperor Hadrian and other Romans. The four chiefs ruling the confederation at that time were Xicotencatl, lord of Titzatlan, Maxixcatzin, lord of Ocotelolco, Tlehuexolotzin, lord of Tepeticpac, and Citlalpopocatzin, lord of Quiahuitztlan. (Clavigero, *Storia Antica*, lib. viii.) (*Vide*, Camarga, *Hist. Tlascala;* and Torquemada, lib. 3–16.)

At the exit of the said valley, I found a great wall of dry stones, about nine feet high, which crossed the whole valley from one mountain to the other; it was twenty feet thick, and had a stone parapet, a foot and a half broad on the top so that one could fight from above. The single entrance was about ten paces broad, and in this entrance one wall doubled over the other, in the form of a *ravelin*, narrowly contracted within about forty paces, in such wise that the entrance was curved instead of being straight.[1] Having inquired the object of that wall they told me that it was built because they were on the frontier of that province of Tascalteca, whose people were Montezuma's enemies, and constantly at war with him. **The Wall of Tlascala**

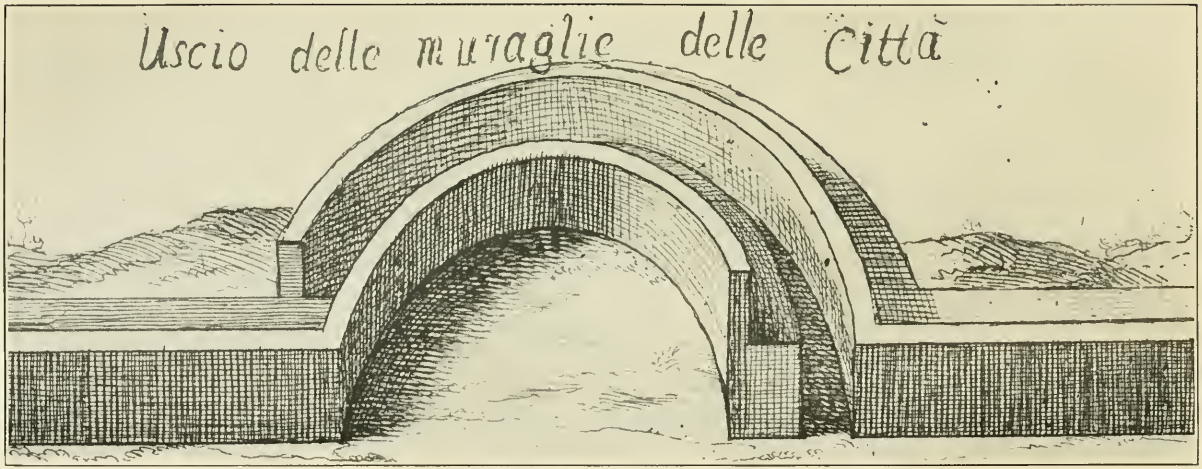
The natives of this valley besought me, that, inasmuch as I was going to see Montezuma their lord, not to pass through the country of these his enemies, who perchance might be ill-disposed towards me, and do me some mischief, whereas they would guide me always through the land of the said Montezuma without going out of it, and that in it I would always be well received. The Cempoalans, however, advised me not to do this, but to go through Tascalteca, for what these people were telling me, was for the purpose of cutting me off from the amity of that province; they told me that all Montezuma's people were bad and treacherous, and would ensnare me in places whence I could never escape. As I had more confidence in the Cempoalans than in the

[1] Bernal Diaz contradicts Cortes's statement that this wall was built of dry stones, and states that the stones were so firmly united by such strong *bitumen* that it required pick axes to separate them. Clavigero, in his notice on the remains of military architecture in Mexico (lib. vii. Sec. xxvi.), gives faith to Bernal Diaz who professed to have carefully studied the construction, though he brusquely characterises the old soldier as an idiot (*sic*) for not distinguishing between *bitumen* and the mortar used by the Mexicans. Lest the ingenious construction of the aperture be not clearly enough explained by Cortes, the accompanying drawing will show its character.

others, I took their advice, and chose the road to Tascalteca, conducting my people with the best caution I could.

Accompanied by about six horsemen, I rode ahead about half a league or more, little thinking of what afterwards happened, but to reconnoitre the country, so that if anything should befall I might perceive it in time to take measures, and prepare my people. After having gone four leagues, and while ascending the hill, two horsemen who went ahead saw certain Indians, wearing the feathers they are accustomed to in war, armed with their swords, and lances, and *rodelas*, who took to flight when they perceived the horsemen. At the same time I came up, and had them called to to return without fear. I advanced to where there were about fifteen Indians, who, massing themselves, began to attack us with their swords, calling to their other people who were in the valley, and fighting with us in such wise that they killed two horses, and wounded three others and two horsemen. In the midst of this, others came up, numbering about four to five thousand. Meantime, eight other horsemen, besides those whose horses were killed, joined me, charging on them until the other Spaniards, to whom I had sent a summons by a horseman, arrived. We did them some harm, in the charges we made, killing fifty or sixty of them, without suffering any hurt ourselves, although they fought with great courage and daring; but, as we were all on horseback, we could charge them, and fall back in safety. When they saw our reinforcements approaching, they retreated, because they were so few, and left us the field.

After they were gone certain messengers came, who said they were the lords of the said province, and with them came two of the messengers whom I had sent. These explained that the said chiefs did not know anything of what those others had done, as they belonged to



THE WALL OF TLASCALA

From *Storia Antica del Messico*, vol. ii., by Clavigero

independent communities, and had acted without their consent, and they were very sorry for it, and would pay for the horses they had killed, and they wished to be my friends, and that I could go on freely, for I would be well received by them [*in hora buena*, viz., in a good hour]. I answered that I was very thankful to them, and that I would consider them as my friends, and would advance as they advised.

That night, one league beyond where this happened, I was obliged to sleep in a dry river bed [*baranca*], not only because it was late, but also because my people were tired. I stayed there as well guarded as possible, stationing my sentinels and scouts, both on horseback and on foot, and at daybreak I left, carrying my van-guard and rear-guard well organised, and my scouts on ahead. **Hostilities in Tlascala**

Arriving at a very small village just at sunrise, the two other messengers came with lamentations saying that they had been bound, and would have been killed, but that they had escaped in the night. At not two stone's-throws distance a great number of Indians appeared well armed, and with much shouting began to attack us, discharging many darts and arrows at us. When I undertook to make my requirements in due form, through the interpreters whom I had brought with me, and before a notary public, the more diligent I was to admonish and require them to keep the peace, just so much the more diligent were they in committing hostilities upon us, and, seeing that neither requirements nor protests were of any avail, we began to defend ourselves as best we could, and thus they kept us fighting, until we found ourselves in the midst of an hundred thousand warriors, who surrounded us on all sides. This went on all day long, until about an hour before sunset, when they retired. In this fight I did them a good deal of harm with about half a dozen cannon, and five or six muskets, forty archers, and thirteen

horsemen, who had been left to me, without our receiving any hurt from them, except the labour and fatigue of fighting and hunger. And it truly appeared that it was God who battled for us, because amongst such a multitude of people, so courageous, and skilled in fighting, and with so many kinds of offensive arms,[1] we came out unhurt.

That night I fortified myself in a small tower of their idols, which stood on a small hill, and afterwards, at daybreak, I left two hundred men and all the artillery in the camp. As I was the attacking party I went out towards evening with the horsemen, and a hundred foot soldiers, and four hundred Indians whom I had brought from Cempoal, and three hundred from Yztacmastitan. Before the enemy had time to assemble, I set fire to five or six small places of about a hundred houses each, and brought away about four hundred prisoners, both men and women, fighting my way back to my camp without their doing me any harm. At daybreak the following morning, more than a hundred and forty-nine thousand men, covering all the country, attacked our camp so determinedly that some of them penetrated

[1] One of their most formidable weapons was the *maquahuitl*, commonly referred to by the Spaniards as a sword. It was a stout stick or club, about three and a half feet long, set with a double row of blades made of the stone called *itztli*, as sharp as razors. The warrior carried this terrible weapon attached to his wrist by a thong, and instances of a horse being disembowelled, or even decapitated at a single blow, are given by many early writers. The blades or *itztli* were quickly dulled, but, even then, such a weapon wielded by a strong man was a fearsome thing.

Their darts, which are so frequently mentioned, were short lances, whose points were tipped with bone or copper, or simply hardened in the fire. Clavigero identifies them with the Roman *Jaculum* or *Telum Amentatum*, and says they were the weapons most feared by the Spaniards. As marksmen, the Mexican bowmen were marvellously quick and accurate; their arrows were also pointed with bone, but, singularly enough, there is no mention throughout the conquest of poison being used on them.

into it, rushing about, and thrusting with their swords at the Spaniards. We mustered against them, and Our Lord was pleased so to aid us, that, in about four hours, we managed that they should no more molest us in our camp, although they still kept up some attacks; thus we kept fighting until it grew to be late, when they retired.

The next day I again went out before daybreak, in another direction, without having been observed by the enemy, taking with me the horsemen, a hundred foot-soldiers, and the friendly Indians. I burned more than a hundred villages, one of which had more than three thousand houses, where the villagers fought with me, though there were no other people there. As we carried the banner of the Holy Cross,[1] and were fighting for our Faith, and in the service of Your Sacred Majesty, to Your Royal good fortune God gave us such a victory that we slew many people without our own sustaining any injury. A little after mid-day when the strong force of the people was gathered from all parts, we had returned victorious to our camp.

Messengers came from the chiefs the next day, saying that they wished to become vassals of Your Highness and my friends, beseeching me to pardon their past fault; and they brought me provisions, and certain feather-work which they use, and esteem and prize. I answered that they had behaved badly, but that I was satisfied to be their friend, and pardon them for all they had done.

The next day there came about fifty Indians, who, it seemed, were men of some consequence amongst them, saying that they had brought us food, and they went about inspecting the entrances and exits of our camp, and some huts in which we were living. The Cempoalans came and

Fate of the Tlascalan Spies

[1] The banner was of black silk bearing the arms of Charles V., and on both sides a red cross surrounded by blue and white rays. The legend was as follows: *Amici sequamur Crucem et si nos fidem habemus vere in hoc signo viceremus.*

told me to watch them, because they were bad men who had come to spy and see what damage they could do us, and that I might rest assured they had come for no other purpose. With some dissimulation, I had one of them taken, without being observed by the others, and leading him and the interpreters apart, frightened him so that he should tell me the truth. He confessed to me that Sintengal,[1] the captain-general of this province, was behind one of the hills opposite the camp, with a great number of people, ready to fall upon us that night, for they said that they had tried by day against us, and had gained no advantage, and now they wished to try by night, when their people would fear neither our horses, our cannon, nor our swords; and they had been sent in order to examine our camp, and those points where they could attack us, and how they could burn the straw huts. I at once had another of the said Indians taken, and also asked him, and he confessed the same as the other in the same words, so I took another five or six, and they all agreed in their statements. Seeing this I had all the fifty taken, and cut off their hands, and returned them to their chief, ordering them to say to him, that, by day or night or at any or all times he might come, he would see who we were. I then had my camp fortified as best I could, and posted the people as seemed most suitable, and we rested thus on our guard until sunset.

When it was growing late, our opponents began to descend into two valleys, thinking they were surrounding us secretly, and to get nearer to us for carrying out their

[1] Xicotencatl, son of the lord of Titzatlan, was a brave and able commander. He bore the same name as his father, which has led some writers to merge the two into one person, and others to confuse their deeds. The father was a very old man, though he was probably not one hundred and forty years old, as some have stated, when he met Cortes he asked to be allowed to feel his face, for he was blind.

intentions. As I was on my guard, however, I saw them, and it seemed to me that it would be very dangerous to allow them to approach near the camp, because at night they could not see the damage I should do them from my side, and they would approach fearlessly, and also because in not seeing them some of the Spaniards might be somewhat negligent in fighting. I also feared that they might set fire to my camp, which should it happen would be most disastrous, and none of us could escape; hence I determined to go out and meet them with all the horsemen and cut them to pieces, thus preventing their approach. And so it happened, that when they discovered we were coming with horses to attack them, without stopping or shouting, they fled into some fields of maize, with which the country was almost covered, and lightened themselves of some provisions which they were carrying with them, for the feast they intended to celebrate, if this time they destroyed us entirely. They left us in security that night. After this occurrence, I remained several days without leaving camp, except in the neighbourhood, to repel the approach of some Indians who gathered to jeer at us, and provoke some skirmishes.

When we had somewhat rested, I made a sally one night, after having inspected the first watch of the guard, taking a hundred foot, the friendly Indians, and the horsemen; and about a league from our camp five horses and mares fell, unable to go on, so I sent them back. Although those who accompanied me, said that I ought to return, as this was an evil omen, I still pushed ahead, confiding in God's supremacy above everything. Before daybreak I fell upon two towns, in which I slaughtered many people, but I did not want to burn the houses, so as to avoid attracting the attention of other people who were very near. / When day dawned I fell upon another large town, which contained according to a count, which I ordered to be taken, more than twenty thousand houses,

and, as I had surprised them, I found them unarmed, and the women, and children, running naked through the streets; and we did them some harm. Seeing they could offer no resistance, a certain number of the inhabitants came to beseech me not to do them further injury, for they desired to become vassals of Your Highness, and my friends, and they recognised that they were at fault in not having trusted me, but that henceforth I would see that they would always do what I commanded them in the name of Your Royal Highness, as your very true vassals. Immediately there came to me more than four thousand of them, suing for peace, and they took us out to a fountain where they gave us good food.

Thus I left them pacified, and returned to our camp, where I found the people who had remained there much frightened, believing I might have been in some danger, as they had seen the horses and mares returning the night before. When they heard afterwards of the victory which God had been pleased to give us, and how I had left those towns at peace, they were very glad, for I certify to Your Majesty, that there was no one amongst us who was not very fearful at penetrating so far into this country, and amongst so many people, where we were so entirely without hope of help from anywhere.

Indeed I had already heard with my own ears, privately, as well as publicly, that I was a Pedro Carbonero, [1] who had got them into this difficulty from which they could never get out. And even more, I heard it said in one of the huts of certain companions (I being in a place where they could not see me), that if I had gone mad, and was going whence I could never escape, they need not do the same, but should rather return to the sea-coast, and that if I wished to return with them, very well, but if

[1] An old proverb which said: "*Pierre le Charbonnier savait bien ou il était, mais il ignorait le moyen d'en sortir*"; pointing at foolish people who were always plunging into difficulties from which they never knew how to emerge.

not, to leave me. This was often required of me, but I would encourage them, telling them to look to it that they were the vassals of Your Highness, and that Spaniards were never found lacking anywhere, and that we were in a position to win the greatest kingdoms and dominions in the world for Your Majesty. I told them, moreover, that we were only doing what we were obliged to do as Christians, by fighting against the enemies of our faith, and that we would gain the glory of the other world, while in this we would obtain the highest praise and honour, such as till our time no generation had won; and that they must perceive that we had God on our side, for Whom nothing was impossible, as they might recognise in the victories which we had obtained, where so many of our enemy had been slaughtered, but none of us. I told them other things of the same kind which seemed fitting, and with these, and the royal favour of Your Highness, they recovered their spirits, and I won them to my purpose, and to do as I wished, which was to complete the undertaking I had begun.

Peace Concluded at Tlascala

The following day, Sicutengal, Captain General of this province, came to see me at ten o'clock, with about fifty of its chiefs, praying me on his part, and on that of Magiscatzin,[1] who was the principal person in all this province, and on behalf of many other lords, that I would admit them to the royal service of Your Majesty and to my friendship, and would pardon them the past errors, because they had not understood who we were. He said that they had exerted all their forces, not only by day, but also by night, to escape being subjected to anyone, since at no time had this province ever been so, nor had they ever had, nor did they have, any master; on the contrary, they had always lived free and independent,

[1] Maxixcatzin, lord of the state of Ocotelolco, in the republic of Tlascala, and commander in chief of the united armies.

since immemorial times, and had always defended themselves against the great power of Montezuma, of his father, and grandfather, who held that country subjected, but had never been able to hold them in subjection, though they had them surrounded on all sides, so that no one could go out of the country. He said also that they ate no salt,[1] since there was none in their country, nor were they allowed to go to buy it anywhere else, nor did they wear any cotton clothing, because their country, on account of its cold, did not produce cotton, and they were deprived of many other things on account of being so shut off. They had endured it, and held it as better thus to be free, rather than be subjected to anyone; and they had wanted to do the same with me, for which reason, as several had already stated, they had tested their forces, and seeing clearly that neither these, nor their artifices, could avail them anything, had decided that, rather than die, and have their houses, and women, and children destroyed, they would become vassals of Your Highness.

I satisfied them, saying that they must recognise that they were to blame for the injury they had sustained, for I had come to their country, thinking that I came to the country of my friends, for the Cempoalans had assured me that they were, and wished to be so; and that I had sent my messengers ahead of me to let them know that I was coming and wished their friendship, and that without replying to me (coming in all security), they had attacked me on the road, killed my two horses, and

[1] Called by the Indians "tequesquit." It is made from the saltpetre, which was largely found in the neighbourhood of Ixtapalapan and Ixtapaluca (*Ixtabl* meaning saltpetre), and formed an important article of commerce, which however did not reach the Tlascalans on account of the permanent state of hostilities. As they were also cut off from the sea, salt had been for fifty years an almost unknown luxury amongst them; cotton which was a product of the *tierra caliente* was for the same reason denied them.

wounded others. Moreover, after having fought with me, they had sent their messengers, saying that what had happened had been without their license or consent, and that certain communities had set themselves to do it without their participation, and that they had reproved them for it, and desired my friendship. Believing this to be true, I had told them that I was pleased, and that they would surely see me next day in their homes as in the houses of friends; and that likewise they had again attacked me on the road, and fought with me all day until night overtook us, notwithstanding that they had been required by me to keep the peace. I reminded them of all the other things they had done to oppose me, and many others which I shall leave unmentioned, so as not to weary Your Highness. Finally they submitted and acknowledged themselves as subjects and vassals of Your Majesty, offering their persons and property for your royal service; and such they did, and have done until to-day, and will always do, as Your Majesty will hereafter see.

I remained six or seven days without leaving that place and camp, because I did not dare to trust them. They besought me to come to a large city, **Description of the City of Tlascala** where all the chiefs of the province lived, and even the chiefs themselves came to beseech me to come into the city, as I would be well received there, and better provided with everything necessary than in the camp. For they were ashamed that I should be so ill-lodged, as they considered me their friend, and they and I were vassals of Your Highness. In response to their prayers, I came to the city, which is about six leagues distant from the dwelling place and camp I had occupied, and is so large and admirable that, although much of what I might say I shall omit, the little which I shall say is almost incredible; for it is much larger than Granada, and very much stronger, having very

good buildings, and it contains a great many more people than Granada did when it was taken, and is much better supplied with provisions, such as bread, birds, game, and river-fish, and other good eatables and vegetables. There is a market in this city, in which every day, above thirty thousand souls sell and buy, without counting many other small markets in different parts of the city. Everything is to be found in this market in which they trade, and could need, not only provisions, but also clothing and shoes. There are jewellery shops, for gold, and silver, and stones, and other valuables of feather-work, as well arranged as can be found in any of the squares or market-places of the world; there is also as good earthenware and crockery as the best in Spain. They also sell wood and coals, and herbs to eat, and for medicinal purposes. There are houses like barbers' shops, where they wash their heads and shave themselves; there are also baths. Finally there prevail good order and politeness, for they are a people full of intelligence and understanding, and such that the best in Africa does not equal them. This province contains many extensive and beautiful valleys, well tilled and sown, and none are uncultivated. The province is ninety leagues in circumference, and, as far as I have been able to judge about the form of government, it is almost like that of Venice, or Genoa, or Pisa, because there is no one supreme ruler. There are many lords all living in this city, and the people who are tillers of the soil are their vassals, though each one has his lands to himself, some more than others. In undertaking wars, they all gather together, and thus assembled they decide and plan them. It is believed that they must have some system of justice for punishing the wicked, because one of the natives of this province stole some gold from a Spaniard, and I told this to that Magiscatzin, the greatest lord among them. After making their investigation, they pursued him to

a city which is near there, called Churultecal, whence they brought him prisoner, and delivered him to me with the gold, telling me that I might chastise him. I thanked them for the diligence they took in this, but told them that, inasmuch as I was in their country, they might chastise him according to their custom, and that I did not wish to meddle with the punishment of their people while I was in their country. They thanked me for this, and took him with a public crier, who proclaimed his offence, leading him through the great market place, where they put him at the foot of a sort of theatre, and with a loud voice again published his offence. And all having seen him, they beat him on the head with sticks until they killed him. We have seen many others in the prisons, who, it is said, were confined there for thefts, and other offences they had committed. According to the visitation which I ordered to be made, this province has five hundred thousand householders, besides those of another small province, called Guazincango, which joins it, whose people live as these do, without a rightful sovereign, and are no less vassals of Your Highness than these Tascaltecas.

Being, Most Catholic Lord, in our camp in the country while I was at warfare with this province, there came to me six lords from amongst the principal vassals of Montezuma, accompanied by about two hundred retainers, telling me that they came on the part of Montezuma to say that he wished to be a vassal of Your Highness, and my friend. He sent word that I should say what I wanted him to give to Your Highness as an annual tribute, of gold, silver, stones, slaves, cotton, and wearing apparel, and other possessions, and that he would give it all, if only I would not come to his country, because it was very sterile, and destitute of provisions, and he would be sorry if I or my people suffered want. He sent me by

Embassy and Presents from Montezuma

them about a thousand dollars of gold, and many pieces of cotton clothing, such as they wear. They remained with me during the war and until the end of it, and well saw what the Spaniards were able to do. They knew of the treaties which were made with this province, and the allegiance given by the chiefs of all the country to the service of Your Sacred Majesty. At which, as it appeared, they showed themselves not much pleased, for they worked in many ways to embroil me with this people, saying that nothing they had told me was true, nor was the friendship they had sworn sincere, and that they formed it to secure me, in order to commit treason when they could with safety. The inhabitants of this province on the other hand, many times advised me not to trust those vassals of Montezuma, because they were traitors who carried on all their affairs with treacheries and tricks, and it was thus they had subjected all the country; and that they as my sincere friends and persons who had known them for a long time, warned me against them. I was not a little pleased to see this discord and want of conformity between the two parties, because it appeared to me to strengthen my design, and later I would find means to subjugate them; that common saying "*De monte*" etc., might be repeated, and I was even reminded of a scriptural authority which says "*Omne regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur.*" So I treated with the one, and the other, and privately I thanked both for the advice they gave me, giving to each the credit for more friendship, than to the other.

I had been in the city twenty days or more, when those lords, Montezuma's messengers, who had always remained with me, told me that I ought to go to a city about six leagues from this Tascaltecal, called Churultecal,[1]

[1] Cholula, sixty leagues distant from the city of Mexico, was the sacred city of Anahuac, the Jerusalem, or Mecca, of the nations, where stood (and stands) the greatest pyramid in Mexico, of whose con-

as its natives were friends of Montezuma's, their sovereign. They said that we might there learn his pleasure, whether it was that I should go to his country, and that some of them would go to speak with him, and tell him what I had told them and return with his answer.

Although they knew that I had there some of his messengers, who had come to speak with me, I told them that I would go, and would leave on a certain day which I made known to them. When it became known to the Tascaltecas what they and I had agreed upon, and how I consented to go with them to that city, the rulers came to me, greatly afflicted, and told me that I must not go on any account, because it had been plotted to kill me and my men in that city. For this purpose, they said, Montezuma had sent fifty thousand men from his country (some part of which joins with that city), whom they kept in garrison, two leagues from the city, and that they had blocked up the customary high road, and had prepared a new one with many pits, in which sharp stakes and wood were placed, covered over in such a manner that the horses would fall, and be lamed; many streets were barricaded, and quantities of stones were collected on the housetops, so that, when we entered the city they might attack us with safety, and accomplish their purpose. They told me, that, if I wanted to confirm all they

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struction there is no authentic record. The form of government there was theocratic, and the priests chose a captain-general to command the army, while the civil affairs were administered by a council composed of six nobles.

The Cholula pyramid, now so covered with earth, and overgrown with shrubs and trees, that its artificial character and architectural lines are no longer discernible, measures at the length of its base 1423 feet, or twice the length of Cheops; the square of the base covers about forty-four acres, and the flat area on the summit a little more than one acre. The chief deity worshipped at Cholula was the mysterious "fair god" Quetzalcoatl (see Appendix III., at the close of this Letter). Bernal Diaz declared that Cholula reminded him of Valladolid because of its many lofty towers.

said, I might judge from the fact that the chiefs of that city had never come to see me, nor to speak with me, though they were so near to this city, while those of Guazincango who lived farther off had come, and if I sent for them I would see they would not come. I thanked them for their advice, and begged them to furnish me persons who would go on my part and call the chiefs. They did so, and I sent to invite them to come and see me, because I wished to tell them certain things on the part of Your Highness, and to explain to them the cause of my coming to this country.

These messengers went, and delivered my message to the chiefs of Churultecal, and two or three persons of inferior rank returned with them, and told me that they had come on the part of those chiefs who were ill and could not come, but that I might tell them what I desired. The people of this city told me that all this was a mockery, and that those messengers were of mean condition, and in no wise should I leave without the chiefs of that city first coming hither. I told those messengers that an embassy from such a high Prince as Your Sacred Majesty could not be given to such persons as they were, and that even their chiefs were unworthy to hear it. They should, nevertheless, appear within three days before me to give their obedience to Your Highness, and to offer themselves as your vassals, with the understanding that, if they did not come within the time fixed, I should fall upon them, and destroy them, and proceed against them as against rebels who refused to submit to Your Majesty's authority. I sent them an order, signed with my name and that of a notary public, with a full explanation of the Royal Person of Your Sacred Majesty, and of my arrival, telling them how all these parts, and many other greater countries, and dominions, belonged to Your Highness, and how those who desired to be your vassals would be honoured and favoured, and how on the

contrary those who rebelled would be punished, according to justice. [1]

The next day, almost all of the chiefs of that city came, and told me that, if they had not come before, it was because the people of this province were their enemies, and that they did not dare to enter their country because they did not consider themselves safe; and that they were sure that they had told me some things respecting them, but I must not give any credence to them, because they spoke as enemies, and not according to facts. They said also that I should go to their city, where I would discover the falsehoods their enemies had been telling, and the truth of what they themselves assured me; and that from thenceforth they gave and acknowledged themselves as vassals of Your Sacred Majesty, and that they would always remain such, serving and contributing in everything as they were commanded on the part of

Embassy from Cholula Visits Cortes

[1] Cortes's unfaltering conviction was that he was an instrument of divine justice, and he acted the part consistently, determined that others should so regard him. He started from the dogmatic assumption that the new world belonged to Spain by right of Pope Alexander's bull of donation; that its inhabitants were therefore just as much the lawful subjects of the Crown as were the natives of Castile, or Granada, and that for them to refuse obedience was rebellion. The native chiefs in resisting his pretentions, and defending their countries, became, according to his reasoning, instigators of revolt and must be dealt with as such. Most of all, the people were practisers of idolatry, in peril of eternal damnation, whom it was a chief part of his mission to rescue, and bring into the knowledge of the Faith. He held himself to be merciful, in that he invariably invited their obedience, by explaining what a privilege it was to be ruled by such a mighty sovereign as the Emperor, and sought to effect their conversion by expounding the doctrines of the Catholic religion. Once this choice was put plainly before them, and they had refused to accept the dual blessings of vassalage and conversion, they became in his eyes contumacious rebels, and conscious heretics. He had the Spanish XVI. century standards as to how all such were to be treated. He followed, in this case, the usual solemn formality of causing a letter to be drawn up by a notary; that the Cholulan priests could not understand a word of it did not detract from the validity of the proceeding.

Your Highness. It was thus set down by a notary public, through the interpreters whom I had.

I still determined to go with them, not only to avoid showing any weakness, but also because from there I thought to treat affairs with Montezuma, as they bounded upon his country, as I have already said, and there was unimpeded intercourse between the two countries.

When the Tascaltecas saw my determination, they were much grieved, and told me repeatedly that I erred, but inasmuch as they had given themselves as vassals to Your Sacred Majesty, and my friends, they wished to go with me, and help me in any emergency.[1] Although I forbade them, and prayed them not to go inasmuch as there was no necessity for it, still as many as about a hundred thousand men, well furnished for warfare, accompanied me to within about two leagues from the city, when after many importunities, they returned, though some five or six thousand of them still remained with me.

I slept in a dry river bed about two leagues distant, to disperse the people, fearing they might cause some scandal in the city, and also because it was already late, and I did not wish to enter the city at a late hour. The next morning, the citizens came out to receive me on the road, with many trumpets,[2] and drums, and also many priests from their mosques, clothed in their vestments, and chanting in the fashion they are accustomed to do in the said mosques.[3] With this solemnity they brought us into the city, where they housed us in a very good dwelling place, where all the people of my company

[1] The real purpose of the Tlascalans was to embroil Cortes with the Cholulans, and, with the help of the invincible Spaniards, to crush their ancient enemy.

[2] These trumpets were made of wood and canes, and were well played, giving forth very sonorous notes.

[3] The Spaniards commonly used the word "mosque" to designate any non-Christian place of worship.

dwelt to their satisfaction; and they brought us some food, though not very generously. Along the road we encountered many signs, such as the natives of this province had foretold us, for we found the high road blocked up, and another opened, and some pits, although not many, and some of the city streets were closed, and many stones were piled on the house tops. They thus obliged us to be cautious, and on our guard.

I found there certain messengers from Montezuma, who came to speak with those others who were with me, but to me they said nothing, because, in order to inform their master, they had come to learn what those who were with me had done and agreed with me. These latter messengers departed, therefore, as soon as they had spoken with the first, and even the chief of those who had formerly been with me also left.

During the three days which I remained there I was ill provided for, and every day was worse, and the lords and chiefs of the city came rarely to see and speak to me. I was somewhat perplexed by this, but the interpreter whom I have, an Indian woman[1] of this country whom I obtained in Putunchan, the great river I have already mentioned in the first letter to Your Majesty, was told by another woman native of this city, that many of Montezuma's people had gathered close by, and that those of the city had sent away their wives, and children, and all their goods, intending to fall upon us and kill us all; and that, if she wished to escape, she should go with her, as she would hide her. The female interpreter told it to that Geronimo de Aguilar, the interpreter whom I obtained in Yucatan, and of whom I have written to Your Highness, who reported it to me. I captured one of the natives of the said city, who was walking about there, and took him secretly apart so that no one saw it, and

The Massacre at Cholula

[1] See Appendix I., close of Letter.

questioned him; and he confirmed all that the Indian woman and the natives of Tascaltecal had told me. As well on account of this information as from the signs I had observed, I determined to anticipate them, rather than be surprised, so I had some of the lords of the city called, saying that I wished to speak with them, and I shut them in a chamber by themselves. In the meantime I had our people prepared, so that, at the firing of a musket, they should fall on a crowd of Indians who were near to our quarters, and many others who were inside them. It was done in this wise, that, after I had taken these lords, and left them bound in the chamber, I mounted a horse, and ordered the musket to be fired, and we did such execution that, in two hours, more than three thousand persons had perished.

In order that Your Majesty may see how well prepared they were, before I went out of our quarters, they had occupied all the streets, and stationed all their men, but, as we took them by surprise, they were easily overcome, especially as the chiefs were wanting, for I had already taken them prisoners. I ordered fire to be set to some towers and strong houses, where they defended themselves, and assaulted us; and thus I scoured the city fighting during five hours, leaving our dwelling place which was very strong, well guarded, until I had forced all the people out of the city at various points, in which those five thousand natives of Tascaltecal and the four hundred of Cempoal gave me good assistance.[1]

[1] This massacre is one of the bloodiest in Mexican history, and concerning it the greatest controversy has raged. Las Casas leads in judging Cortes most severely, and says that it was a part of his policy, as indeed it was of the Spaniards everywhere, to strike terror into the natives by a wholesale slaughter. Bernal Diaz defends Cortes and says his course was justified later, when, in the investigation made by the friars who came for that purpose to Cholula, they learned from the chiefs and other Cholulans that there had really been a concerted plot to destroy the Spaniards in their city. A contrary theory is, that the Tlascalans invented the fiction of a plot expressly to

On my return to our quarters, I spoke with those captive lords, and asked them why they wished to kill me treacherously. They answered that it was not their fault, as those of Culua, who were vassals of Montezuma, had put them up to it, and that Montezuma had stationed in such and such a place, (which as we learned afterwards was a league and a half distant), a garrison of fifty thousand men to accomplish it. But they now had learned how they had been deceived, and if I would set one or two of them at liberty, they would gather the people of the city, and return to it with all the women, and children, and chattels; and they prayed me to pardon them the error they had committed, assuring me that, from henceforth, no one should deceive them, and that they would be faithful and loyal vassals of Your Highness and my friends. After having spoken at length to them about their error, I liberated two of them, and the next day the whole city was filled with men, women, and children, and as safe as if nothing of what had passed had ever happened. Immediately afterwards I liberated all the other chiefs and lords whom I had made prisoners, they promising that they would serve Your Majesty very loyally.

During the fifteen or twenty days I remained there, the city and country were completely pacified and re-

provoke a massacre of their Cholulan enemies; if this be true, Doña Marina was the only instrument for accomplishing their purpose. She told Cortes that a Cholulan woman of position, whose friendship she had cultivated, had warned her of the Spaniards' doom, and urged her to take shelter in her own house, and thus save herself. Granted that Cortes was, with reason, fearful of treachery, his only safety lay in forestalling the plotters, but this it seems might have been done by securing the chiefs, and Montezuma's envoys, who were the suspected instigators, and even making an example of them. Nothing can excuse the wholesale massacre of a defenceless population taken in a trap; such excessive measures overstepped by far the needs of the situation. If the commander's intention was as Las Casas describes, he succeeded, for the news of the tragedy quickly spread, and threw Montezuma into a panic of helpless fear.

peopled, so that it seemed nobody was lacking; and their market place and the affairs of the city were as they ordinarily were; and I made those of this city of Churultecal friends with those of Tascaltecal, for they used to be so formerly,[1] and it was but a short time since that Montezuma had won them over to his allegiance, and made them enemies of the others.

Description of Cholula

This city of Churultecal is situated in a plain, and has up to twenty thousand houses in the body of the city, and as many more in the outskirts. It is an independent state, and has its recognised boundaries, and they do not obey any chiefs, but govern themselves like the Tascaltecas. The people are better clothed in some ways than the Tascaltecas, because their honoured citizens all wear *albornoces*[2] above their other clothing, though they differ from those of Africa in having pockets, but in the making, and stuff and borders, they are very similar. They have all been, and are since the recent occurrence, very faithful vassals to Your Majesty, and very obedient in all that I required and commanded of them in Your Royal name; and I believe that henceforth they will remain so. This city has very fertile fields, for they have much land, and the greater part is irrigated; and the city seen from the outside is more beautiful than the cities of Spain, because it is very level, and contains many towers, for I certify to Your Highness that I counted from a mosque four hundred and odd towers in the city,

[1] Tlascala and Cholula had fought as allies against the triple alliance of Mexico, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, but Montezuma had profited by a subsequent dissension between them to aggravate the quarrel which thus led to a war, the Mexicans aiding the Cholulans. This cost the latter their independence, as Montezuma established his sway over them. They were reputed to be false, and their very name had come to be synonymous with treachery. (Orozco y Berra, Tom. iv., p. 239.)

[2] The Moorish *burnous*.

and all belonged to mosques. It is the best adapted for Spaniards to live in of any I have seen since leaving the port, as it has some uncultivated lands and water for the purpose of raising cattle, such as have no others we have seen so far. For, such is the multitude of people who live in these parts, that there is not a palm of land which is not cultivated, and even then there are many places in which they suffer for want of bread, and there are many poor who beg amongst the rich in the streets, and at the market places, just as the poor do in Spain, and other civilised countries.

I spoke, to those messengers of Montezuma who remained with me, about the treachery which had been plotted against me in the city, and how the lords of it affirmed that it had been done by the counsel of Montezuma. I said that it did not seem to me that it was a deed for such a great lord as he was, who had sent me such honourable persons as his messengers, saying he was my friend, while on the other hand he devised plans for injuring me by means of strangers, so that he might cast off the responsibility if things did not turn out as he thought. But since it was thus, and he did not keep his word, nor did he speak the truth to me, I now intended to alter my plans; for until now I had come with the intention of seeing and speaking with him, and of having him for a friend, and holding many conversations, and in the hope of peace. Now, however, I would go to his country with war, doing him all the harm I could as an enemy, though this I regretted very much, as I had always wanted him for a friend that I might counsel with him respecting what I was to do in this country.

Concerning the Plot of the Cholulans

They answered me, that as they had been with me many days, they knew nothing concerning that plot, except what they had heard in the city after the occurrence, and they could not believe that it was done by the order and

counsel of Montezuma; and they besought me, before I determined to abandon his friendship and to make war as I said, that I should inform myself of the truth, and permit one of them, who would promptly return, to go and speak with Montezuma, as from this city to the place where he resides is twenty leagues. I told them I agreed to this, and let one of them go, who after six days returned, together with the first who had gone, and they brought me ten plates of gold, and fifteen hundred pieces of stuff, and many provisions of chickens and *panicap*,[1] which is a beverage they drink; and they told me that Montezuma was much grieved over the disturbance that had happened, and which had been arranged in Churultecal. They said that I must believe that it had not been by his counsel and order, for he assured me it was not so, and that, though the people who were there in garrison were of a truth his, they had moved without his commands, induced by the natives of Churultecal, who bordered on two of his provinces, one of which was called Acancigo, and the other Izzucan.[2] They said that there existed a certain alliance of neighbourhood between them, for helping each other, and it was thus they had come there, and not by his orders; but in the future I should learn from his deeds, that what he had told me was true, though he still besought me not to seek to come to his country, because it was sterile, and we would suffer privations, and that from wherever I might be, I could send to ask him for whatever I wanted, and he would send it very promptly. I answered that my visit to his country could not be renounced, because I would have to send a full account of him and of it to Your Majesty, and that I was persuaded of the truth of what

[1] There is no such word or drink, and this name may be here due to an error in writing or copying; it has been taken by some commentators to mean *pan y cacao* (bread and cocoa). Gayangos suggests that it may be the sugared drink called *Atole*.

[2] Two towns in the present state of Puebla.

he had sent to tell me; that inasmuch as I could not forego seeing him, I hoped he would approve of it, and not plan any opposition, because it would be greatly to his injury, and would grieve me very much.

From the time he saw it was my determination to visit him and his country, he sent me word to say that I might come, and very welcome; that he would await me in that great city where he was, and he sent me many of his people to accompany me, as I was already near his country. These persons sought to induce me to go by a certain road, where they must have prepared some attack upon me, as it afterwards appeared, and as was seen by many Spaniards whom I afterwards sent to reconnoitre the country. There were so many bridges, and difficult passes on that road, that, if I had gone by it, they might very easily have accomplished their intentions, but as God has always taken care to guide, even from your childhood, the royal affairs of Your Sacred Majesty, and as I and those of my company went in your royal service, He showed us another road, which, although somewhat steep, was not as dangerous as that by which they wished to take us.

Ascent of Popocatapetl

About eight leagues from this city of Churultecal, there are two very high and marvellous mountains,[1] for at the end of August they were so covered with snow that we could distinguish nothing else on their tops but what seemed snow, and

[1] Popocatapetl. Signifying in the Mexican language "smoking mountain." Humboldt gives its height as 5400 metres. Together with Ixtaccihuatl (the white woman) this volcano was venerated as a god, the Indians considering them as man and wife; their feast days were celebrated both in the city and in grottoes in the mountains. The crater of Popocatapetl was thought to be an abode of the tormented spirits of wicked kings. The greatest eruption of which there is any record took place in 1353; the mountain was in a period of activity in 1519 which lasted till 1528. Another eruption occurred in 1533, but the one which caused the most serious apprehension was on Feb. 24, 1664, when a huge piece of the crater fell in and showers of ashes

from the highest one, a great volume of smoke, as thick as a house, continually comes forth, not only by day, but also by night, rising to the clouds as straight as a pillar, and it appears to come out with such force, that although on the top of the mountain a strong wind prevails, it does not turn it. As I have always wished to give a very detailed account of this country to Your Highness, I wanted to know about this mystery, which seemed somewhat marvellous, so I sent ten of my companions, who seemed adapted for such an enterprise, accompanied by some natives of the country to guide them, charging them to climb the said mountains, and learn the secret of that smoke, whence and how it came. They went, and strove, and did all that was possible to scale it, but never were able to do so on account of the quantity of snow which lay on the mountain, and the clouds of ashes which are blown about on it, and also because they could not endure the great cold which prevails there. They nearly reached the top, however, and so high was it, that, when they were up there, the smoke began to come out, and they say it came with such an impetus and noise as if the entire mountain was about to sink; so they descended, and brought with them a considerable quantity of snow and icicles, which seemed a strange thing to see in these parts, for according to the opinion of the pilots, they belong to the tropics. They say especially that this country is situated in the twentieth degree, which is parallel to the island of Hispaniola, where the heat is continually very great.

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rained in the streets of Puebla, where the windows were broken, and roofs of houses collapsed. I visited the crater in 1884, when it resembled the basin of a dried-up lake, from which came puffs of whitish smoke-like steam, rising from small fissures here and there, while over all there was a strong smell of sulphur. Diego de Ordaz, who led the Spaniards in making the first known ascent of the mountain, had conceded to him on his return to Spain, the privilege of quartering a smoking volcano in his arms.

While going to see this mountain, they came upon a road, and asked the natives who went with them whither it lead; and these answered to Culua,[1] and that it was a good road, and that the other by which the Culuans wished to take us was not good. The Spaniards followed it until they reached the top of the Sierras, between which the road passes, and from there they beheld the plains of Culua, and the city of Temixtitan,[2] and the lakes which are in the said province, of which I will hereafter make relation to Your Highness. They came back very glad at having discovered so good a road, and God knows how happy I was about it.

After these Spaniards, who had gone to visit the mountains, returned, and I had informed myself accurately, not only from them, but also from the natives, respecting the road which they had discovered, I spoke to those messengers of Montezuma who were to guide me to his country, and told them, as it was shorter that I wished to go by that road, instead of the one they had proposed. They answered that I said truly that it was shorter, and more level, and the reason they had not suggested it, was because by it we should have to pass one or two days' journey through the country of Guasucingo, whose people were their enemies, and therefore we would not find all the necessaries, as when going through the land of Montezuma; but, if I wished to go that way, they would arrange that provisions should be brought up to the road from the other side.

So we started, with some fears that those people might persist in playing some trick upon us, but as we had already announced that we would take that road, it did not seem well to me to leave it, and to change, lest they might suspect a want of courage had caused it. The

Departure from Cholula

[1] Colhua, another name for Mexico, also spelled Culua.

[2] See Appendix II., close of Letter.

day I left the city of Churultecal, I marched four leagues to some hamlets of the city of Guasucingo,[1] where I was well received by the natives, who gave me some female slaves, and wearing apparel, and certain small pieces of gold. This last in all was but little, because these people did not have much, as they belong to the league and alliance of the Tascaltecas, and they are shut in by Montezuma, and surrounded by his country in such a manner that they can have no commerce with any other province except their own, and therefore, they live very poorly.

The following day I mounted the pass between the two mountains of which I have spoken, and, descending it, we beheld one of the provinces, of the country of the said Montezuma, called Chalco,[2] where, about two leagues before we reached the town, I found a very good dwelling place, which had been recently built, and was so large that all my company and myself were very commodiously lodged in it; this although I had with me more than four thousand Indians, of these provinces of Tascaltecal, Guasucingo, Churultecal, and Cempoal, for whom there were ample provisions of food. Here great fires of plenty of wood were burned in all the rooms, for the cold was very bitter, as we were surrounded by two mountains both covered with snow.

Certain persons came to speak to me here who seemed to be chiefs, amongst whom was one who, I was told, was brother to Montezuma. He brought me about three thousand dollars of gold, and told me in Monte-

[1] Spelled in various ways. Guajocingo, or Huejocingo, in the state of Puebla.

[2] The province of Chalco had been conquered by the Mexicans only after much bloodshed, and was held in subjection by force; hence its people were not loyal subjects to be counted upon in time of need. They were the first to profit by the Spaniards' arrival in the valley to throw off their allegiance. Cortes promised them relief, and assured them that he had come to redress their wrongs and establish justice.

zuma's name that the latter sent that to me, and prayed me to go back, and not insist on coming to his city, as the country was scarce of food, and the roads leading there were bad; and, as it was all on the water, I could enter it only in canoes. He also enumerated many other inconveniences to prevent me going. They said I had only to say what I wanted, for Montezuma their sovereign would order it to be given to me, and would likewise agree to give me annually *certum quid*, which would be taken to the coast, or wherever I wished. I received them very well and gave them some Spanish articles, such as they esteem very much, especially to him who was said to be a brother of Montezuma's. I replied to his embassy, that, if it was in my hands to return, I would do so in order to please Montezuma, but that I had come to this country by order of Your Majesty, and that the principal thing, of which you had ordered me to give an account, was Montezuma, and his great city, of whom, and of which, Your Majesty had possessed information since a long time. I said also that they should tell him from me, that I prayed him to approve my going to see him, because no injury would result from it to his person and country, but rather that he should receive good; and if after I had seen him he did not wish to have me in his company, then I would return; and that we could better decide between ourselves, how he should serve Your Highness, than through third persons, even were they those in whom we had full confidence. With this answer they departed.

Judging from appearances which we observed, and the preparation which had been made in this dwelling place of which I have spoken, the Indians expected to attack us that night, and perceiving this, I took such precaution that they, noting it, changed their plan, and secretly sent away that night a number of people who had gathered in the woods, as was seen by our watchmen and scouts.

At daybreak I set out for a town, called Amaqueruca,[1] which is two leagues from here, in the province of Chalco, which in its principal town, and the villages within two leagues of it, has some twenty thousand inhabitants. We were lodged in some very good houses, belonging to the chief of the said town, and many persons who seemed to be of high rank came to speak to me, telling me that Montezuma, their sovereign lord, had sent them to await me here, and to see that I was provided with everything necessary. The lord of this place gave me some forty female slaves, and three thousand *castellanos*. During the two days I was there, they provided us amply with all necessary food.

Cortes Descends into the Valley of Mexico

The next day, accompanied by those chiefs who had come on the part of Montezuma to wait for me, I left, and slept four leagues farther on, in a small town, almost half of it on the water of a great lake, where they lodged us very well; and on the land side there is a chain of very rugged and stony mountains. Here likewise they would have been very willing to try their forces with us, except, as it appeared, they wanted to do so with safety, and by surprising us in the night. But, as I was so well informed, I anticipated their intention, and kept such a guard that night, that of their spies who came, some in canoes by water, and others by descending from the mountains, to see if there was any possibility of carrying out their wishes, some fifteen or twenty were taken by our men, and killed. Thus, few returned to give the information they had come to secure; and finding us always so well prepared they decided to change their tactics, and treat us well.

The next morning, just as I was ready to leave the town, there arrived some ten or twelve chiefs, as I learned

[1] Amecamecan, now called Amecameca; it lies at the foot of Popocatapetl, some two leagues from Tlalmanalco.

afterwards, and among them a great lord, a youth of about five and twenty years, to whom all showed great attention, so much so, that, after he had descended from a litter in which he had come, all the others began clearing the road of the stones and straw before him. Approaching, he told me he came on the part of Montezuma, his sovereign lord, and that the latter besought me to pardon him if he did not come in person to see me, and receive me, as he was indisposed, but that his city was already near, and, inasmuch as I was still determined to go to him, we would meet there, when I should learn from him his disposition towards Your Highness's service. It was added that he still besought me, if it were possible, not to go thither, as I would have much trouble and privation to endure, and that he was much ashamed not to be able to provide there as he desired. With this, they fell on their knees, protesting so much, that it only remained to say that they would defend the road by force if I still insisted in going on. I satisfied, and calmed them with the best words possible, saying that my going thither would do them no harm, but bring them many advantages; and so, after giving them some presents, they took their leave.

I departed immediately after them, accompanied by many people who seemed to be of much importance, as it afterwards appeared, and I continued along the road by the shore of that great lake. A league from my last stopping place, I saw in this lake, two musket-shots distant from the shore, a small city which might have had one or two thousand inhabitants, and which was all afloat on the water; having many towers as it seemed but no entrance. About a league from there, we reached a great causeway, as broad as a horseman's lance, extending within the lake about two-thirds of a league. This led to the city,[1] which though small, was the most beautiful

[1] The town of Cuitlahuac, now called Tlahua, on the lake of

we had yet seen, not only on account of the well decorated houses and towers, but also because of the excellent construction of its foundations in the water.

In this city, which has about two thousand inhabitants, we were very well received, and they gave us excellent food. The lord and chiefs of it came to speak with me, and prayed me to remain, and sleep there; however, Montezuma's messengers who were with me told me not to stop, but to go on to another city, called Iztapalapan,[1] about three leagues distant, belonging to a brother of Montezuma; so I did this. The exit from the said city where we dined, whose name at present does not occur to my memory, is by another causeway, a long league in length, which extends to the mainland.

Description of Iztapalapan

Having arrived at this city of Iztapalapan, the chief of it came out to receive me, as well as one from another great city, called Calnaalcan,[2] which is near, being perhaps three leagues distant, and these were accompanied by many other chiefs who were waiting for me; and they gave me three or four thousand *castellanos*, some female slaves, and wearing apparel, receiving me very well. This city of

Texcoco. The Spaniards called it Venezuela (little Venice). Clavigero insists that, after leaving Cuitlahuac for Iztapalapan, the two discontented brothers of the King of Texcoco, Ixtlilochitl and Coanacochtzin, met Cortes, and offered their alliance, explaining their grievances against their brother Cacamatzin, the reigning King, and Montezuma their uncle; and that Cortes went on their invitation to Texcoco. As neither Cortes nor Bernal Diaz mentions what would have been an important and interesting divergence from their route, and both account for almost every hour of the time, by recording their daily movements, the visit to Texcoco seems more than doubtful. The interview with the two princes might easily have taken place on the road.

[1] Iztapalapan, seven miles from Mexico, preserves its ancient name, though the lake has long since receded, leaving it high and dry. The city had between 12,000 and 15,000 houses, and was ruled by Cuitlahuatzin, a brother of Montezuma. The chief glory of Iztapalapan was its botanical and zoölogical garden, with reservoirs full of all kinds of fish, such as no town in Europe possessed at that time.

[2] Coyohuacan.

Iztapalapan has some twelve or fifteen thousand households, and stands on the shore of a great salt lake, half of it in the water, and the other half on land. Its chief has some new houses, which, though still unfinished, are as good as the best in Spain; I say as large and well constructed, not only in the stone work, but also in the wood work, and all arrangements for every kind of household service, all except the relief work, and other rich details, which are used in Spanish houses, but are not found here. There are both upper and lower rooms, and very refreshing gardens, with many trees and sweet scented flowers, bathing places of fresh water, well constructed, with steps leading down to the bottom. He has also a large garden round his house, in which there is a terrace with many beautiful corridors and rooms, and, within the garden, is a great pool of fresh water, very well built with sides of handsome masonry, around which runs an open walk with well laid tile pavements, so broad that four persons can walk abreast on it, and four hundred paces square, making, in all, sixteen hundred paces. On the other side of this promenade, towards the wall of the garden, it is all surrounded by a lattice work of canes, behind which are arbours, planted with fragrant shrubs. The pool contains many fish, and water fowl, such as ducks, cranes, and other kinds of water birds, in such numbers that the water is covered with them.

The next day after I had arrived in this city, I left, and having gone half a league, I reached another causeway, leading out into the lake a distance of two leagues to the great city of Temixtitan, which stands in the midst of the said lake. This causeway is two lances broad, and so well built that eight horsemen can ride abreast; and, within these two leagues, there are three cities, on one and the other side of the said highway, one called Mesicalsingo, founded for the greater part within the said lake,

and the other two, called Niciaca, and Huchilohuchico,[1] on the other shore of it, with many of their houses on the water.

The first of these cities may have three thousand families, the second more than six thousand, and the third four or five thousand. In all of them, there are very good edifices, of houses and towers, especially the residences of the lords and chief persons, and the mosques or oratories, where they keep their idols. These cities have a great trade in salt, which they make from the water of the lake, and from the crust of the land which is bathed by the lake, and which they boil in a certain manner, making loaves of salt, which they sell to the inhabitants in the neighbourhood.

I followed the said causeway for about half a league before I came to the city proper of Temixtitan. I found at the junction of another causeway, which joins this one from the mainland, another strong fortification, with two towers, surrounded by walls, twelve feet high with castellated tops. This commands the two roads, and has only two gates, by one of which they enter, and from the other they come out. About one thousand of the principal citizens came out to meet me, and speak to me, all richly dressed alike according to their fashion; and when they had come, each one in approaching me, and before speaking, would use a ceremony which is very common amongst them, putting his hand on the ground, and afterwards kissing it, so that I was kept waiting almost an hour, until each had performed his ceremony. There is a wooden bridge, ten paces broad, in the very outskirts of the city, across an opening in the causeway, where the water may flow in and out as it rises and falls. This bridge is also for defence, for they remove and replace the long broad wooden beams, of which the bridge is

Cortes Enters the City of Mexico

[1] Huithilohuchico—Huitzilopocho—is the present Cherubusco.

made, whenever they wish; and there are many of these bridges in the city, as Your Highness will see in the account which I shall make of its affairs.

Having passed this bridge, we were received by that lord, Montezuma, with about two hundred chiefs, all barefooted, and dressed in a kind of livery, very rich, according to their custom, and some more so than others. They approached in two processions near the walls of the street, which is very broad, and straight, and beautiful, and very uniform from one end to the other, being about two thirds of a league long, and having, on both sides, very large houses, both dwelling places, and mosques. Montezuma came in the middle of the street, with two lords, one on the right side, and the other on the left, one of whom was the same great lord, who, as I said, came in that litter to speak with me, and the other was the brother of Montezuma, lord of that city Iztapalapan, whence I had come that day. All were dressed in the same manner, except that Montezuma was shod, and the other lords were barefooted. Each supported him below his arms, and as we approached each other, I descended from my horse, and was about to embrace him, but the two lords in attendance prevented me, with their hands, that I might not touch him, and they, and he also, made the ceremony of kissing the ground. This done, he ordered his brother who came with him, to remain with me, and take me by the arm, and the other attendant walked a little ahead of us. After he had spoken to me, all the other lords, who formed the two processions, also saluted me, one after the other, and then returned to the procession. When I approached to speak to Montezuma, I took off a collar of pearls and glass diamonds, that I wore, and put it on his neck, and, after we had gone through some of the streets, one of his servants came with two collars, wrapped in a cloth, which were made of coloured shells. These they esteem very much;

and from each of the collars hung eight golden shrimps executed with great perfection and a span long. When he received them, he turned towards me, and put them on my neck, and again went on through the streets, as I have already indicated, until we came to a large and handsome house, which he had prepared for our reception. There he took me by the hand, and led me into a spacious room, in front of the court where we had entered, where he made me sit on a very rich platform, which had been ordered to be made for him, and told me to wait there; and then he went away.

After a little while, when all the people of my company were distributed to their quarters, he returned with many valuables of gold and silver work, and five or six thousand pieces of rich cotton stuffs, woven, and embroidered in divers ways. After he had given them to me, he sat down on another platform, which they immediately prepared near the one where I was seated, and being seated he spoke in the following manner:

Montezuma's First Discourse to Cortes

"We have known for a long time, from the chronicles of our forefathers, that neither I, nor those who inhabit this country, are descendants from the aborigines of it,[1] but from strangers who came to it from very distant parts; and we also hold, that our race was brought to these parts by a lord, whose vassals they all were, and who returned to his native country. After a long time he came back, but it was so long, that those who remained here were married with the native women of the country, and had many descendants, and had built towns where they were living; when, therefore, he wished to take them away with him, they would not go, nor still less receive him as their ruler, so he departed.[2] And we have always held that those who descended from him would

[1] See Appendix III. at close of Letter

[2] See Appendix IV. at close of Letter.

come to subjugate this country and us, as his vassals; and according to the direction from which you say you come, which is where the sun rises, and from what you tell us of your great lord, or king, who has sent you here, we believe, and hold for certain, that he is our rightful sovereign, especially as you tell us that since many days he has had news of us. Hence you may be sure, that we shall obey you, and hold you as the representative of this great lord of whom you speak, and that in this there will be no lack or deception; and throughout the whole country you may command at your will (I speak of what I possess in my dominions), because you will be obeyed, and recognised, and all we possess is at your disposal.

"Since you are in your rightful place, and in your own homes, rejoice and rest, free from all the trouble of the journey, and wars which you have had, for I am well aware of all that has happened to you, between Puntunchan and here, and I know very well, that the people of Cempoal, and Tascaltecal, have told you many evil things respecting me. Do not believe more than you see with your own eyes, especially from those who are my enemies, and were my vassals, yet rebelled against me on your coming (as they say), in order to help you. I know they have told you also that I have houses, with walls of gold, and that the furniture of my halls, and other things of my service, were also of gold, and that I am, or make myself, a god, and many other things. The houses you have seen are of lime and stone and earth." And then he held up his robes, and showing me his body he said to me, "Look at me, and see that I am flesh and bones, the same as you, and everybody, and that I am mortal, and tangible." And touching his arms and body with his hands, "Look how they have lied to you! It is true indeed that I have some things of gold, which have been left to me by my forefathers. All that I possess, you may have whenever you wish.

"I shall now go to other houses where I live; but you will be provided here with everything necessary for you and your people, and you shall suffer no annoyance, for you are in your own house and country."

I answered to all he said, certifying that which seemed to be suitable, especially in confirming his belief that it was Your Majesty whom they were expecting. After this, he took his leave, and, when he had gone, we were well provided with chickens, and bread, and fruits, and other necessities, especially such as were required for the service of our quarters. Thus I passed six days well provided with everything necessary, and visited by many of the lords.

I have already mentioned at the beginning, Most Catholic Lord, that when I started from the city of Vera Cruz, in search of this lord, Montezuma, I left there a hundred and fifty men, to build that fort which I had begun, and I likewise stated, that I had left many villages and forts in the neighbourhood of that town, under the royal dominion of Your Highness, and the natives as very loyal vassals of Your Majesty.

Treachery of Quauhpopoca

While I was in the city of Churultecal, I received letters from the captain, whom I had left in my place at Vera Cruz, informing me that Quauhpopoca,[1] lord of the city called Almeria, had sent messengers to him, saying, that if he had not yet offered to become a vassal of Your

[1] Quauhpopoca commanded the garrisons at Nauhtla (named Almeria by the Spaniards) and Tochpan, which is the present town of Tuxpan.

If Quauhpopoca acted by his sovereign's orders, he merely did his duty, and merited no punishment from Cortes, but if, on the other hand, he acted on his own initiative, then Montezuma was free from blame and should not have been degraded by the imposition of chains. Cortes's action is indefensible; his intention doubtless was to convince the emperor that there was no depth of humiliation to which he might not be brought, and to prove to the people that to kill a Spaniard was the greatest of crimes, sure to be followed by the direst punishment.

Highness, nor had appeared to give his obedience, with all his lands, as he was obliged to do, it was because he had to cross an enemy's country, and that, fearing to be molested by them, he had deferred coming; but to send him four Spaniards to accompany him, because, they, through whose country he had to pass, knowing for what purpose he was coming, would not then dare molest him, and he would immediately come. The captain, believing that what the said Qualpopoca had sent to say was true, as many others had done the same, had despatched him the four Spaniards, but, after he got them in his power, he tried to kill them, in such a way as would make it appear that he had not done it. After he had killed two of them, however, the other two, wounded, escaped to the forests. The captain had then attacked the city of Almeria, with fifty Spaniards, two horsemen, two field pieces, and about eight thousand friendly Indians. He fought with the inhabitants of the said city, and slaughtered many of them, driving out the rest, and burnt, and destroyed it, because the Indians accompanying him were their enemies, and had put much diligence into it. Qualpopoca, the lord of the city, together with the other chiefs, who had come thither to assist him, escaped by taking flight.

The captain was informed by some of the prisoners, taken amongst the defenders of the city, that Qualpopoca had killed the said Spaniards, whom we had sent, because Montezuma had ordered him, and his other vassals, that, as soon as I left the town of Vera Cruz, they should attack those vassals who had rebelled against him, and offered themselves to the service of Your Highness; and that he should use every means he could to kill the Spaniards I had left there, so that they could not aid nor favour them. This was the reason they had done what they had.

Six days having passed, Most Invincible Prince, after

I had arrived in the city of Temixtitan, and, having seen something of it, although little in proportion to the amount there is to be seen and noted, it appeared to me, even from what I had seen of it and the country, that it would be conducive to Your Royal Highness's service, and to our security, that Montezuma should be in my power, and not at his entire liberty, so that he might not relax his intention and disposition to serve Your Highness. I thought this, especially because we Spaniards are somewhat touchy and importunate, and, if he should happen to become angry, he could do us such injury with his great power, that there would remain no recollection of us; and also because, having him in my power, all the other countries who were subject to him, would come to the knowledge and service of Your Majesty, as afterwards happened.

Cortes Plans to Seize Montezuma

I determined to seize him, and confine him in my quarters, which are very strong; and, thinking over all the forms and ways in which I could accomplish this, without provoking any scandal or commotion upon his arrest, I remembered what my captain at Vera Cruz had written about the occurrence in the city of Almeria, as I have related, and how it had become known, that all that had happened there had taken place by Montezuma's command. I stationed sufficient guards in the cross streets, and went to the palace of Montezuma, as I had at other times gone to see him; and, after conversing with him lightly on pleasant subjects, and after he had given me some valuables in gold, and one of his daughters, and some daughters of other lords to some of my companions, I told him that I had learned what had happened in the city of Nautecal, or Almeria, and about the Spaniards whom they had killed there, and that Qualpopoca gave as his excuse, that all he had done had been by Montezuma's order, and that, as his vassal, he could not

have done otherwise. I said that, because I did not believe Qualpopoca's excuse of his fault, it seemed to me that he ought to send for him, and the other chiefs who had helped him in the murder of the Spaniards, so that the truth might be known, and they be punished, and Your Majesty might clearly perceive his good disposition. Otherwise the reports of those wicked men might provoke Your Highness to anger against him, from which, instead of the favours Your Highness would now grant him, evil would result; for I was convinced that the truth was contrary to what they declared. He immediately sent for certain of his people, to whom he gave a small stone figure, like a seal, which he wore tied to his arm, ordering them to go to the city of Almeria, which is about sixty or seventy leagues from that of Muxtitan [Mexico], and bring the said Qualpopoca; to ascertain what others had taken part in the murder of the Spaniards, and to bring them likewise; and, if they resisted, to bring them as prisoners, and, if they should resist imprisonment, to call upon certain tribes in the neighborhood, which he then named, to seize them by force of arms; but on no account to return without them.

These men immediately left, and, after they had gone, I told Montezuma that I was very grateful to him for the diligence he had used in the imprisonment of those men, for I must render an account to Your Royal Highness for those murdered Spaniards. To enable me to give this, it now only remained that he should stop in my quarters, until the truth was established, and it was known that he was blameless. I earnestly prayed him not to feel pained at this, because he would not be kept a prisoner, but would have entire liberty; that I would place no impediment to his service and authority in his dominions, and that he might choose any room he pleased in the palace where I was, where he should remain at his pleasure, well assured that he should suffer no annoyance

or unpleasantness, but rather that, in addition to his own attendants, my companions would also obey his commands. We had much conversation and argument about this, which would be too lengthy to write, and even too prolix to recount to Your Highness, as well as of little bearing on the case, hence I will not say more than that finally he agreed to come with me, and immediately gave orders to prepare the apartment he wished to occupy, which was well fitted up, and put in order. This having been done, many lords came, and having taken off their vestments, which they carried under their arms, barefooted they brought the litter, not much adorned, and, weeping, they placed him on it, in profound silence. Thus we went to my quarters without causing any commotion in the city, although some had begun, but, when Montezuma heard of it, he ordered it to be stopped, and thus all was as completely quiet as though nothing had happened; and this continued all the time I kept Montezuma prisoner, for he lived at his entire pleasure, and with all his service, just as he had it in his own palace, which was great and marvellous, as I will hereafter say. And I, and those of my company, did everything we could to please him.

Some fifteen or twenty days having passed since his imprisonment, those who had been sent for Qualpopoca, and the others who had killed the Spaniards, returned, bringing the said Qualpopoca, and one of his sons, and with them fifteen other persons whom they said had taken part in the murders. Qualpopoca was carried in a litter, very much in the style of a lord, as he in reality was. They were delivered to me, and I kept them under guard in prison, and afterwards when they confessed that they had killed the Spaniards, I had them interrogated as to whether they were vassals of Montezuma. Qualpopoca answered, asking if there existed any other lord

Montezuma in Chains

of whom he might be vassal, as much as to say there was no other. I likewise asked them if what had been done there was by Montezuma's order; and they answered, "No," although afterwards, when the sentence, that they should be burned, was carried into execution, all with one voice said it was true that Montezuma had ordered them to do it, and that they had obeyed his command. So they were burned publicly, in one of the squares, without occasioning any commotion, and the day when they were burned, as soon as they confessed that Montezuma commanded them to kill the Spaniards, I ordered him to be put in chains, which frightened him not a little.

After I had spoken to him, I removed the irons the same day, and he remained very satisfied, and ever afterwards I endeavoured to please him, and keep him satisfied as far as possible; especially did I always say publicly to all the natives of the country, nobles as well as others, who came to see him, that Your Majesty had been pleased that Montezuma should continue to exercise authority, recognising the suzerainty of Your Highness, and that Your Highness would be well pleased by their obeying him, and regarding him as their lord, as they had before I came to the country. So good was my treatment of him, and the satisfaction he felt, that sometimes, and frequently, I offered him his liberty, praying him to return to his palace; but he told me each time that he was contented there, and that he did not wish to go, because nothing that he wished was wanting, more than in his own palace, whereas it might happen that, if he went back, the lords of the country, his vassals, would importune him to do things, in spite of himself, which would be contrary to his own wish, and to Your Highness's service. He added, that he was determined to serve Your Majesty in all that was possible, and up till now he had told them what he wanted done, and was content where he was, for, should anyone attempt to

make suggestions to him now, he could excuse himself by answering that he was not free, and thus evade them. He often asked permission to go and enjoy himself, and pass the time in certain pleasure houses, both out of the city and in it, and I never denied him this. He often would, with five or six Spaniards go to enjoy himself one or two leagues out of the city, returning very gladly to the quarters where I kept him; and, whenever he went out, he would present many valuables, and clothing, as well to the Spaniards who went with him, as to the natives, who always accompanied him to at least the number of three thousand men, most of them nobles and persons of distinction; and, as he always gave them many banquets and feasts, they who went with him were always contented.

Cortes Investigates the Gold Mines of Mexico

When I afterwards understood perfectly, that he was wholly devoted to the service of Your Royal Highness, I prayed him, so that I might give a better account to Your Majesty of this country, to show me the mines from which he obtained gold, and he answered with perfect good will that he would gladly do so. He immediately sent certain of his servants, distributing them two by two over four provinces, from which he said he got the gold; and he asked me to send Spaniards with them, to see how it was taken out. So, for each of his own people, I sent two Spaniards, and some went to a province, called Cuzula, eighty leagues from the great city of Temixtitan, the natives of which are his vassals, and there they were shown three rivers, from each of which they brought me specimens of gold of very good quality, although it was taken out with mean tools, as they had only those with which the Indians extract it. On the road, they passed through three provinces, according to what the Spaniards said, of fine land, and many hamlets and cities, and towns, very populous, and con-

taining buildings equal to any in Spain. They told me especially of a house and fort, greater, and stronger, and better built, than the castle of Burgos, and that the people of this province, called Tamazulapa, were better dressed than any others we have seen, and, as it seemed to them, more intelligent. Others went to another province called Malinaltepeque, another seventy leagues from the said great city, and more towards the sea-coast; and they brought me likewise specimens of gold from a great river there.

The others went to a country, called Teniz,[1] farther up this river, belonging to a people of a different language from that of Culua, and the ruler of that country is called Coatelicamat. His country lies in a very high rugged mountain chain, and is not subject to Montezuma; the people of that province are very war-like, fighting with lances, twenty or thirty palms long, and, because they are not vassals of Montezuma, the messengers who accompanied the Spaniards did not dare to enter that country, without first notifying the chief and asking his permission. They told him they had come with the Spaniards to see the gold mines in his country, and besought him, on my part, and that of Montezuma, their lord, to permit it. Coatelicamat answered, that he was very willing the Spaniards should come into his country, and see the mines, and whatever else they wished, but that the Culuans, who were subject to Montezuma, must not come, because they were his enemies. The Spaniards were somewhat perplexed, as to whether they should go alone, or not; those who accompanied them told them not to go, as they would be killed, and that it was in order to kill them that Coatelicamat would not permit the Culuans to accompany them. At last they determined to go alone, and the lord and his people received them very well, and showed them seven or eight mines

[1] Tenich.

where they took out gold; and in their presence the Indians took some, out of which they brought me specimens. Coatelicamat sent me certain messengers with the Spaniards, offering himself and his country for the service of Your Majesty; and he sent me certain valuables of gold, and such wearing apparel as they have.

The others went to another province, called Tuchitepeque,[1] which is almost in a direct line towards the sea, twelve leagues beyond the province of Malinaltepeque where, as I have already said, gold had been found. Two other rivers were shown them there, where gold is also found.

As there is in those parts, according to what the Spaniards who went there informed me, every facility for making plantations, and procuring gold, I begged Montezuma to establish a plantation for Your Majesty in that province of Malinaltepeque, which seems the best adapted, and he put such diligence into it, that, within two months after I had spoken to him, sixty *fanegas*[2] of maize, and ten of beans had been sown, and two thousand plants of *cacap*,[3] which bears a fruit somewhat like almonds. This fruit they sell ground, and esteem so highly, that it is used instead of money all over the country, and with it everything can be bought in the market places and elsewhere. He built four good houses, in one of which, besides the living apartments, they made a water tank, and put five hundred ducks in it; these are much esteemed, because they pluck their feathers every year, and use them for making wearing apparel. And they placed fifteen hundred chickens in it, not to speak of other farm stock, which the Spaniards judged to be worth twenty thousand dollars of gold. I also prayed Montezuma to tell me if on the sea-coast there was any river or bay

[1] Xuchitepec.

[2] Hanega, also called *fanega*, a dry measure corresponding approximately to the bushel.

[3] Cacao from which chocolate is obtained.

where ships could enter safely, and he answered me that he did not know, but that he would have the coast drawn for me, with its bays and rivers, and that I might send the Spaniards to see them, and that he would give me people to guide and take them; and thus we did.

Another day they brought me a cloth, on which the whole coast was drawn, showing a river, larger than the others, flowing into the sea; this seemed to be amongst the mountain chains called Sanmin,[1] which form such a bay, that the pilots heretofore believed it divided the province called Mazamalco. Montezuma told me I might choose whom I wished to send, and he would provide means for seeing and learning everything. I immediately named ten men, amongst them some pilots and persons acquainted with the sea. Furnished with the provisions he gave us, they left, and explored the whole coast, from the port of Chalchilmeca,[2] which is called San Juan, where I first disembarked.

The Spaniards Search for a Harbour

They covered about sixty odd leagues, but nowhere found a river or bay where ships could enter, although there are many very large ones on the said coast; they took soundings of all from the canoes, and finally reached the said province of Cuacalco,[3] where was the river shown on the chart. The chief of that province, called Tuchintecla, received them very well and gave them canoes to explore the river. They found the shallowest part at its mouth, two and a half fathoms in depth, and, twelve leagues up the river, the greatest depth they found was five or six fathoms; from their observations they judged it has about the same depth for thirty leagues

[1] Coatzacoalco was the name of the river; the place described is between the sierras of San Martin and Sant Anton, hence the name *Sanmin* may be a careless or an intentional contraction of San Martin.

[2] Chalchuihcuecan was the Indian name for San Juan de Ulua, the port of Vera Cruz.

[3] Coatzacoalco.

up from its mouth. On its banks, are many large towns, with an innumerable population, and all the province is level, and rich and abundant in produce. The people of this province are not vassals or subjects of Montezuma, but rather his enemies. The lord of it sent word, when the Spaniards arrived, that the Culuans must not enter his country because they were his enemies, but, when the Spaniards returned home with this account, he sent certain messengers with them, who brought me valuables of gold, tiger-skins, feather-work, stones, and stuffs. These told me, on his part, that Tuchintecla had known of us for a long time, because his friends of Puntunchan (which is the river of Grijalba), had told him that I had passed there, and had fought with them when they did not admit me to their town, and how afterwards they became friends of mine, and vassals of Your Majesty. The messengers said that Tuchintecla, likewise, offered himself to Your Royal Highness, with all his country, and he prayed me to consider him as my friend, on conditions that the Culuans should not enter his country, though I might see everything in it, which might be useful to Your Royal Highness, of which he would give whatever I might direct every year.

When I learned, from the Spaniards who visited that province, of its adaptability for settlement, and of the harbour they had found, I rejoiced greatly; for, ever since I came to this country, I have sought to find a harbour on its coast, where I might found a settlement. I had never succeeded, however; nor is one to be found on the whole coast, from the river of San Antonio, which is next the Grijalba to that of Panuco which is down the coast, where certain Spaniards settled by order of Francisco de Garay, as I shall hereafter recount to Your Highness.

To assure myself still more about that province and harbour, and of the good will of the natives, and of everything else necessary for a settlement, I again sent certain

of my experienced people to ascertain all these matters. They went with the messengers, whom that chief Tuchintecla had sent to me, taking some things for him which I gave them. Upon their arrival, they were well received by him; and they again examined and sounded the harbour and river to see whether a town might be founded. They afterwards brought me a long and exact description, saying that there was everything necessary for a settlement, and that the chief of the province was very content, strongly desiring to serve Your Highness. When this account came, I immediately dispatched a captain, with one hundred and fifty men, to lay out, and build a town, and construct a port; for the chief of that province had offered to do this as well as everything else that might be necessary or commanded by me; and he even built six houses on the site chosen for the town, and said that he was very pleased we should come there to settle, and remain in his country.

In the past chapters, Most Powerful Lord, I have said that, at the time of my coming to the great city of Temixtitan, a great lord had come, on behalf of Montezuma, to meet me on the road, who, as I learned afterwards, was a near relative of the latter's, and had dominions called Haculuacan,[1] adjoining those of Montezuma. The capital of these is a very great city on this salt lake, six leagues by canoe, and ten by land, from this city of Temixtitan. The city is called Tezcuco,[2] and it may have

[1] Acolhuacan.

[2] Texcoco, capital of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, stood at the N. E. extremity of the lake of the same name. It rivalled Mexico in size and importance, was the centre of Nahua culture, and has been described as the "Athens" of the Aztecs. The triple alliance of Mexico, Texcoco, and Tlacopan (Tacuba) formed the core of the Aztec Empire, where centred the civilisation of Anahuac. The Kings of Texcoco and Tlacopan recognised the King of Mexico as their over-lord in war, and in the affairs of the central administration, but in all other respects these sovereigns were equal, absolute, and independent, in their respective kingdoms. Texcoco was older than Mexico, and Nezahualcoyotl,

about thirty thousand households. There are in it, Sire, very wonderful houses, and mosques, and very large, and well built, oratories; it has also extensive market places. Besides this city, he possesses two others, one, called Ocurman,[1] at three leagues from Tezcuco, and the other, called

the greatest of its rulers, bore the title of *Aculhua Tecutl*, which Mexican historians define as equivalent to *Caesar*. This King once declared war upon Mexico over a trifling question of etiquette, sacked the capital, and exacted a heavy indemnity. The kingdom was divided into seventy-five principalities or lordships, something after the feudal system in Europe during the Middle Ages. The last king, before the arrival of the Spaniards, had been Nezahualpilli, a ruler of superior ability, one of the greatest princes in Mexican history, who left one hundred and forty-five children, of whom there were four sons eligible for the succession. The electors, under pressure of Montezuma, chose the eldest, with the result that the youngest, Ixtlitxochitl, contested the election, and plunged the country into civil strife from which it emerged divided, and in this weakened and distracted state Cortes found it upon his arrival. The ambitious Ixtlilxochitl, discontented with the portion he had received, was a permanent pretender to his brother's crown, and he secretly sent an embassy to Cortes at Cempoal asking his help, and offering his own alliance. This afforded Cortes an early insight into the internal dissensions of the empire, by which he so readily and ably profited. (Ixtlilxochitl. *Hist. Chichineca.*) Texcoco rapidly diminished both in population and importance after the conquest, and Thomas Gage, who visited it in 1626, found a village containing one hundred Spaniards and three hundred Indians, reduced to poverty. Great havoc had been wrought by the wanton destruction of the magnificent forests of giant cedar trees in the neighbourhood. Panfilo de Narvaez accused Cortes of using seven thousand cedar beams in the construction of his palace alone. (*Voyage de Thomas Gage*, Tom. i. cap. xiii).

[1] Near by Acolman stand the pyramids of Teotihuacan which Cortes nowhere mentions, though it seems impossible he should not have seen them. Of the two large pyramids, the greater was called Tonatiuh Ytzaqual, or House of the Sun, and the lesser, Metztli Ytzaqual, House of the Moon. The first is 680 feet long at the base and 180 feet high; the second is much smaller at the base and 34 feet lower. Other small pyramidal mounds, about thirty feet high were arranged in regular lines or streets, leading up to the large pyramids, and were dedicated to the stars. As this plain bore the Toltec name of *Micoatl*, or Way of the Dead, it has also been thought that the whole group formed a necropolis. Siguenza assigns their construction to the Olmechs, though most authorities believe they were built later, by the

Otumpa, six leagues distant, each containing between three and four thousand householders. This province and lordship of Haculuacan has many other villages and hamlets, and very good lands and farms. It joins on one side with the province of Tascaltecal, of which I have already spoken to Your Majesty.

This lord, called Cacamazin,[1] rebelled, after the imprisonment of Montezuma, as well against the service of Your Highness, to which he had offered himself, as against Montezuma. Although he was required many times to obey the royal mandates of Your Majesty, he never complied, for, besides my sending to require him, Montezuma also sent to summon him, but he answered that, if anything was wanted of him, they should come to his country, and that there he would show what he was worth, and the service he was obliged to render. According to my information, he had gathered a multitude of warriors well prepared for action. As I was unable to

Plot to Capture Cacamtzin

Toltecs. When I visited them in 1884 they were then so overgrown with vegetation, and in such a state of progressive dilapidation, that their total destruction seemed assured, unless prompt measures were taken for their preservation. (Humboldt, *Vues des Cordillères.* Charnay, *Ancient Cities of the New World.*)

56. While Cacamatzin was kept in Montezuma's capital, his brother had been killed by the Spaniards, and a tribute levied on Texcoco, with such methods that it differed only in name from pillage. When the King contrived to escape from Mexico, he assembled other princes of the neighbourhood in Texcoco, among whom were his brothers Coanococh and Ixtlilxochitl, to whom he proposed that a stand should be at once made against the invaders. Premature wranglings over the division of the fruits of their expected victories broke up this council, not only without any practical decision having been reached, but with sharpened animosity between the three rival brothers. Montezuma's part in the treachery, which Cortes naively describes, was despicable. Coanococh and Ixtlilxochitl were among the conspirators who betrayed the King.

Cacamatzin, when brought into Montezuma's presence to hear his exhortations to make peace with the Spaniards, upbraided the Emperor for his cowardice and treachery. His death will be noticed in a later note.

win him, either by warnings or requirements, I spoke to Montezuma, and asked his advice as to what we ought to do, for the rebellion should not remain unchastised. He answered, that to seize him by force, would expose us to much danger, as he was a great lord, and had many forces and people, and could not be taken without great risk of many people perishing. He had, however, many chiefs from the country of Cacamazin who lived with him and whom he paid and he would speak with them, so that they might win over some of Cacamazin's people, and being assured that they would favour our party, we could take him with safety.

Montezuma came to an understanding with those persons, who induced Cacamazin to meet them in the city of Tezcuco, for the purpose of deliberating on certain matters of state, for, as chiefs, they were grieved that he was doing certain things that might ruin him. Thus, they assembled in a very beautiful palace of Cacamazin's on the borders of the lake, so constructed that canoes can pass under it, going in and out. They had secretly prepared certain canoes, with forces in readiness, in case the said Cacamazin should resist his imprisonment, and, while in this consultation, the chiefs seized him, before his people suspected anything, and brought him across the lake to the great city, which I have already said is six leagues from there. When they arrived, they placed him in a litter, as was customary, and required by his rank, and brought him to me, and I ordered chains to be put on him, and held him in very safe keeping.

Acting on the advice of Montezuma, in the name of Your Majesty, I placed his son, whose name is Cucuzcacin,[1] in his lordship, and I ordered that all the tribes and lords of the said province and lordship should obey him as ruler, until Your Highness should order other-

[1] Cuicuitzcatzin: a younger brother who was baptised and became known as Don Carlos.

wise. Thus it was done thenceforward, and all obeyed and served him as lord, the same as the said Cacamazin; and he was obedient in everything I commanded in Your Majesty's name.

A few days after the imprisonment of Cacamazin, Montezuma held a meeting of all the lords of the city and the neighbouring countries; and, when all were assembled, he sent to ask me to join them, and, when I arrived, he spoke in this manner: "My brothers and friends, you know that, for a long time you, and your fathers, and grandfathers, have been, and are, subjects and vassals of my forefathers and myself, and that you have always been well treated by them, and by me, and that you have likewise done what good subjects are obliged to do towards their rightful sovereign. I also believe that you have kept in mind, from your forefathers, that we are not natives of this country, and that they came to it from another, very far off, that they were brought here by a sovereign, whose vassals they all were, who left them in it, but who returned after a long time; that he found our forefathers already settled and established in this country, and married to the women, and having a great increase of sons, so that they did not choose to return with him, nor much less to receive him as their sovereign; and that he departed, saying that he would return, or send such a force that they would be compelled to submit. You also know, that we have always expected him, and, according to what the Captain has told us of that King and Lord who has sent him here, and according to the direction whence he says he comes, I hold it to be certain, and you must also hold it thus, that his sovereign is the one we have been expecting especially as the Captain says that they have had information there respecting us.

Speech of Montezuma to His Nobles

"Since our predecessors did not act justly towards

their sovereign lord, let us do so, and let us give thanks to our gods, because that which they looked for has come to pass in our times. I heartily pray you, inasmuch as all this is well known to you, that, as you have obeyed me as your sovereign, henceforward you will regard and obey this great king, because he is your rightful sovereign, and, in his place, you must hold this, his Captain; also that all the tributes and services, which until now you have paid to me, you do give to him, because I also shall pay tribute, and serve in all that he may command me. In so doing, you will do your duty as you are obliged to do, and you will, moreover, in doing this, give me much pleasure."

All this he told them, weeping the greatest tears, and the greatest sighs, a man can give vent to; and all those lords who had heard him were likewise weeping so much, that, during a considerable time, they were unable to answer. And I assure Your Sacred Majesty, that there was not one among the Spaniards who heard this discourse who did not feel great compassion.

After they had somewhat restrained their tears, they answered, that they regarded him as their sovereign, and they promised to do all that he ordered them to do, and that for this, and for the reason he had given them, they would do it gladly; that henceforth, for all time, they gave themselves as vassals of Your Highness and henceforth they, all together, and each one singly, would promise, and did promise, to comply with all that should be commanded them in the royal name of Your Majesty, as good and loyal vassals ought to do; and that they would concur with their tributes and services, which heretofore they had given to the said Montezuma, and with everything else which might be commanded in the name of Your Highness. All this passed before a notary public, who at my request recorded it in due form, in the presence of many Spaniards for witnesses.

This decision and offer of the said lords, for the royal service of Your Majesty having been completed, I spoke to Montezuma one day, and told him that Your Highness was in need of gold, on account of certain works ordered to be made, and I besought him to send some of his people, and I would also send some Spaniards, to the provinces and houses of those lords who had there submitted themselves, to pray them to assist Your Majesty with some part of what they had. Besides Your Highness's need, this would testify that they began to render service, and Your Highness would the more esteem their good will towards your service; and I told him that he also should give me from his treasures, as I wished to send them to Your Majesty, as I had done with the other things. He asked me afterwards to choose the Spaniards whom I wished to send, and two by two, and five by five, he distributed them through many provinces and cities, whose names I do not remember, as the papers have been lost, and also because they were many and divers; and moreover some of them were at eighty and one hundred leagues from the said great city of Temixtitan. He sent some of his people with them ordering them to go to the lords of those provinces and cities, and tell them that I had commanded each one of them to contribute a certain measure of gold which he gave them. Thus it was done, and all those lords to whom he sent gave very compliantly, as had been asked, not only in valuables, but also in bars and sheets of gold, besides all the jewels of gold, and silver, and the feather-work, and the stones, and the many other things of value which I assigned and allotted to Your Sacred Majesty, amounting to the sum of one hundred thousand *ducats* and more. These, besides their value, are such, and so marvellous, that for the sake of their novelty and strangeness they have no price, nor is it probable that all the

Treasure Collected by the Spaniards

princes ever heard of in the world, possess such treasures. Let not what I say appear fabulous to Your Majesty, because, in truth, all the things created on land, as well as in the sea, of which Montezuma had ever heard, were imitated in gold, most naturally, as well as in silver, and in precious stones, and feather work, with such perfection that they seemed almost real. He gave me a large number of these for Your Highness, besides others, he ordered to be made in gold, for which I furnished him the designs, such as images, crucifixes, medals, jewelry of small value, and many other of our things which I made them copy. In the same manner, Your Highness obtained, as the one-fifth of the silver which was received, one hundred and odd *marks*, which I made the natives cast in large and small plates, porringers, cups, and spoons, which they executed as perfectly as we could make them comprehend.

Besides these, Montezuma gave me a large quantity of stuffs, which considering it was cotton, and not silk, was such that there could not be woven anything similar in the whole world, for texture, colours, and handiwork. Amongst these, were many marvellous dresses for men and women, bed clothing, with which that made of silk could not be compared, and other stuffs such as tapestry, suitable for drawing-rooms and churches. There were also blankets and rugs, for beds both of feather-work, and of cotton in divers colours, also very marvellous, and many other things so curious and numerous I do not know how to specify them to Your Majesty. He also gave me a dozen *cerbatanas*,[1] with which he shoots, and of their perfection I likewise know not what to say to Your Highness; for they were decorated with very excellent paintings of perfect hues, in which there were figures of many different kinds of birds, animals, flowers, and divers other objects, and the mouthpieces and

[1] Long tubes or pipes.

extremities were bordered with gold, a span deep, as was also the middle, all beautifully worked. He gave me a pouch of gold net-work for the balls, which he told me he would give me also of gold. He gave me also some turquoises [*sic*] of gold, and many other things, whose number is almost infinite.[1]

To give an account, Very Powerful Lord, of the greatness, and the strange and marvellous things of this great city of Temixtitan to Your Royal Excellency, and of all the dominions and splendour of Montezuma its sovereign; of all the rites and customs which these people practise, and of the order prevailing in the government, not only of this city, but also of others belonging to this lord, much time and many very expert narrators would be required. I shall never be able to say one-hundredth part of what might be told respecting them, but, nevertheless, as far as I am able, I shall speak of some of the things I have seen, which although badly described, I know very well will cause so much wonder, that they will hardly be believed, because even we, who see them here with our own eyes, are unable to comprehend their reality. Your Majesty may be assured, that, if there be anything wanting in my relation, it will be rather in falling short, than by overdrawing, not only in this, but in all other matters of which I shall give an account to Your Highness; but it seems to me only just towards my Prince and Sovereign to tell him very clearly the truth, without interpolating matters which diminish or exaggerate it.

Before beginning to describe this great city, and the others which I mentioned in the other chapter, it

[1] It had been decided at the outset, by common accord, that, after deducting the royal fifth of all spoils and profits of whatsoever nature, which went to the crown, one fifth of the remainder should be the portion of Cortes. All the rest was to be divided among the members of the expedition, those who remained in garrison at Vera Cruz sharing equally with those who started on the march to Mexico. (*Doc. Ined.*, tom. XXVI., p. 5–16, tom. XXVII., p. 37. *Bernal Diaz cap. cv.*)

appears to me that to understand them better I should describe Mexico, which is where this great city, some others of which I have spoken, and the principal seat of Montezuma's dominion are. This province is ciroular, and completely surrounded by high and rugged mountains. Its plain is perhaps seventy leagues in circumference, in which there are two lakes,[1] occupying almost all of it, for a canoe travels fifty leagues within their borders, and one of these lakes is of fresh water, and the other larger one is salt. The lakes are divided from one another on one side by a small chain of very high hills, in the middle of one end of this plain, except for a strait between these hills and the high mountains; the strait is about a bow shot across. Communication between one lake and the other, and between the cities, and the other towns round about, is by means of canoes, with no need of going by land. The large salt lake rises and falls in its tides like the sea; its waters, whenever it rises, falling into the fresh-water lake as rapidly as though it were a great river; and when it ebbs, the fresh water then runs into the salt lake.

Cortes Describes Mexico to Charles V.

This great city of Temixtitan is built on the salt lake, and from the mainland to the city is a distance of two leagues, from any side from which you enter. It has four approaches by means of artificial causeways, two cavalry lances in width. The city is as large as Seville or Cordoba. Its streets (I speak of the principal ones) are very broad and straight, some of these, and all the others, are one half land, and the other half water on which they go about in canoes. All the streets haev openings at regular intervals, to let the water flow frmo one to the other, and at all of these openings, some of

[1] The lakes of Chalco and Texcoco, the first being of fresh, and the second, of salt water.

which are very broad, there are bridges, very large, strong, and well constructed, so that, over many, ten horsemen can ride abreast. Perceiving that, if the inhabitants wished to practise any treachery against us, they had plenty of opportunity, because the said city being built as I have described, they might, by raising the bridges at the exits and entrances, starve us without our being able to reach land, as soon as I entered the city, I made great haste to build four brigantines, which I had completed in a short time, capable whenever we might wish, of taking three hundred men and the horses to land.

The city has many squares where markets are held, and trading is carried on. There is one square, twice as large as that of Salamanca, all surrounded by arcades, where there are daily more than sixty thousand souls, buying and selling, and where are found all the kinds of merchandise produced in these countries, including food products, jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, zinc, stone, bones, shells, and feathers. Stones are sold, hewn and unhewn, adobe bricks, wood, both in the rough and manufactured in various ways. There is a street for game, where they sell every sort of bird, such as chickens, partridges, quails, wild ducks, fly-catchers, widgeons, turtle-doves, pigeons, reed-birds, parrots, owls, eaglets, owlets, falcons, sparrow-hawks and kestrels, and they sell the skins of some of these birds of prey with their feathers, heads, beaks, and claws. They sell rabbits, hares, and small dogs which they castrate, and raise for the purpose of eating.

The Great Market-place

There is a street set apart for the sale of herbs, where can be found every sort of root and medical herb which grows in the country. There are houses like apothecary shops, where prepared medicines are sold, as well as liquids, ointments, and plasters. There are places like

our barber's shops, where they wash and shave their heads. There are houses where they supply food and drink for payment. There are men, such as in Castile are called porters, who carry burdens. There is much wood, charcoal, braziers made of earthenware, and mats of divers kinds for beds, and others, very thin, used as cushions, and for carpeting halls, and bed-rooms. There are all sorts of vegetables, and especially onions, leeks, garlic, borage, nasturtium, water-cresses, sorrel, thistles, and artichokes. There are many kinds of fruits, amongst others cherries, and prunes, like the Spanish ones. They sell bees-honey and wax, and honey made of corn stalks, which is as sweet and syrup-like as that of sugar, also honey of a plant called maguey,[1] which is better than most; from these same plants they make sugar and wine, which they also sell.

They also sell skeins of different kinds of spun cotton, in all colours, so that it seems quite like one of the silk markets of Granada, although it is on a greater scale; also as many different colours for painters as can be found in Spain and of as excellent hues. They sell deer skins with all the hair tanned on them, and of different colours; much earthenware, exceedingly good, many sorts of pots, large and small, pitchers, large tiles, an infinite variety of vases, all of very singular clay, and most of them glazed and painted. They sell maize, both in the grain and made into bread, which is very superior in its quality to that of the other islands and mainland; pies of birds, and fish, also much fish, fresh, salted, cooked,

[1] The whitish, slippery, fermented liquor called *pulque* is extracted from the maguey and is still the popular drink in Mexico; as it must be drunk fresh, special pulque trains daily carry supplies to towns along the railway lines. Flavoured with pineapple, strawberry, and other fresh fruit juices, and well iced, it is a very good drink, wholesome, and only intoxicating if drunk immoderately. The manufacture and sale of the fiery spirit, mescal, also drawn from the maguey, are under careful restrictions and it is as destructive as absinthe.

and raw; eggs of hens, and geese, and other birds in great quantity, and cakes made of eggs.

Finally, besides those things I have mentioned, they sell in the city markets everything else which is found in the whole country and which, on account of the profusion and number, do not occur to my memory, and which also I do not tell of, because I do not know their names.

Each kind of merchandise is sold in its respective street, and they do not mix their kinds of merchandise of any species; thus they preserve perfect order. Everything is sold by a kind of measure, and, until now, we have not seen anything sold by weight.

There is in this square a very large building, like a Court of Justice, where there are always ten or twelve persons, sitting as judges, and delivering their decisions upon all cases which arise in the markets. There are other persons in the same square who go about continually among the people, observing what is sold, and the measures used in selling, and they have been seen to break some which were false.

This great city contains many mosques, or houses for idols, very beautiful edifices situated in the different precincts of it; in the principal ones of which are the religious orders of their sect, for whom, besides the houses in which they keep their idols, there are very good habitations provided. All these priests dress in black, and never cut or comb their hair from the time they enter the religious order until they leave it; and the sons of all the principal families, both of chiefs as well as noble citizens, are in these religious orders and habits from the age of seven or eight years till they are taken away for the purpose of marriage. This happens more frequently with the first-born, who inherit the property, than with the others. They have no access to women,

The Aztec Priests

nor are any allowed to enter the religious houses; they abstain from eating certain dishes, and more so at certain times of the year than at others.

Amongst these mosques, there is one principal one, and no human tongue is able to describe its greatness and details, because it is so large that within its circuit, which is surrounded by a high wall, a village of five hundred houses could easily be built. Within, and all around it, are very handsome buildings, in which there are large rooms and galleries, where the religious who live there are lodged. There are as many as forty very high and well-built towers, the largest having fifty steps to reach the top; the principal one is higher than the tower of the chief church in Seville.[1] They are so well built, both in their masonry, and their wood work, that they could not be better made nor constructed anywhere; for all the masonry inside the chapels, where they keep their idols, is carved with figures, and the wood work is all wrought with designs of monsters, and other shapes. All these towers are places of burial for the chiefs, and each one of their chapels is dedicated to the idol to which they have a particular devotion. Within this great mosque, there are three halls wherein stand the principal idols of marvellous grandeur in size, and much decorated with carved figures, both of stone and wood; and within these halls there are other chapels, entered by very small doors, and which have no light, and nobody but the religious are admitted to them. Within these are the images and figures of the idols, although, as I have said, there are many outside.

Cortes Overthrows the Idols

The principal idols in which they have the most faith and belief I overturned from their seats, and rolled down the stairs, and I had those chapels, where they kept them, cleansed, for they were full of blood from the sacrifices; and

[1] See Appendix V., close of Letter.

I set up images of Our Lady, and other Saints in them, which grieved Montezuma, and the natives not a little. At first they told me not to do it, for, if it became known throughout the town, the people would rise against me, as they believed that these idols gave them all their temporal goods, and, in allowing them to be ill-treated, they would be angered, and give nothing, and would take away all the fruits of the soil, and cause the people to die of want. I made them understand by the interpreters how deceived they were in putting their hope in idols, made of unclean things by their own hands, and I told them that they should know there was but one God, the Universal Lord of all, who had created the heavens, and earth, and all things else, and them, and us, who was without beginning, and immortal; that they should adore, and believe in Him, and not in any creature, or thing. I told them all I knew of these matters, so as to win them from their idolatries, and bring them to a knowledge of God, Our Lord; and all of them, especially Montezuma, answered that they had already told me they were not natives of this country, and that it was a long time since their forefathers had come to it, therefore they might err in some points of their belief, as it was so long since they left their native land, whilst I, who had recently arrived, should know better than they what they should believe, and hold; and if I would tell them, and explain to them, they would do what I told them, as being for the best. Montezuma and many chiefs of the city remained with me until the idols were taken away and the chapels cleansed, and the images put up, and they all wore happy faces. I forbade them to sacrifice human beings to the idols, as they were accustomed to do, for besides its being very hateful to God, Your Majesty had also prohibited it by your laws, and commanded that those who killed should be put to death. Henceforth they abolished it, and, in all the time I

remained in the city, never again were they seen to sacrifice any human creature.

The figures of the idols, in which those people believe, exceed in size the body of a large man. They are made of a mass of all the seeds and vegetables which they eat, ground up and mixed with one another, and kneaded with the hearts' blood of human beings, whose breasts are opened when alive, the hearts being removed, and, with the blood which comes out, is kneaded the flour, making the quantity necessary to construct a great statue. When these are finished the priests offer them more hearts, which have likewise been sacrificed, and besmear the faces with the blood. The idols are dedicated to different things, as was the custom of the heathen who anciently honoured their gods. Thus, to obtain favours in war these people have one idol, for harvests another, and for everything in which they desire any good, they have idols whom they honour and serve.

There are many large and handsome houses in this city, and the reason for this is that all the lords of the country, vassals of Montezuma, inhabit their houses in the city a certain part of the year; moreover there are many rich citizens, who likewise have very good houses. Besides having very good and large dwelling places, all these people have very beautiful flower gardens of divers kinds, as well in the upper, as in the lower dwellings.

The Aqueducts

Along one of the causeways which lead to the city, there are two conduits of masonry each two paces broad, and five feet deep,[1] through one of which a volume of very good fresh water, the bulk of a man's body, flows into the heart of the city, from which all supply themselves, and drink. The other which is empty brings the water, when they wish to clean the first conduit, for, while one is being cleaned, the water flows through the other.

[1] An *estado* was a man's height, or about five and one-half feet.

Conduits as large round as an ox's body bring the fresh water across the bridges, thus avoiding the channels by which the salt-water flows, and in this manner the whole city is supplied, and everybody has water to drink. Canoes peddle the water through all the streets, and the way they take it from the conduits is this: the canoes stop under the bridges where the conduits cross, where men are stationed on the top who are paid to fill them. At the different entrances to the city, and wherever the canoes are unloaded, which is where the greatest quantity of provisions enter the city, there are guards, in huts to collect a *certum quid* of everything that comes in. I do not know whether this goes to the sovereign, or to the city, because up till now I have not been able to ascertain, but I believe it is for the sovereign, for, in other market places of other provinces, that contribution has been seen to be paid to the ruler. There are to be found daily in the markets and public places of the city many workmen, and masters of all trades, waiting to be hired.

The people of this city had better manners, and more luxury in their dressing and service, than those of other provinces and cities, for the reason that the sovereign, Montezuma, always resided there, and all the nobles, his vassals, frequented the city, so better manners, and more ceremony prevailed. But to avoid being prolix in describing the things of the city (though I would fain continue), I will not say more than that, in the service and manners of its people, their fashion of living was almost the same as in Spain, with just as much harmony and order; and considering that these people were barbarous, so cut off from the knowledge of God, and other civilised peoples, it is admirable to see to what they attained in every respect. As far as the service surrounding Montezuma is concerned, and the admirable attributes of his greatness and state, there is so much to write that

I assure Your Highness I do not know where to begin, so as to finish what I would say of any part respecting it. For, as I have already said, what greater grandeur can there be, than that a barbarian monarch, like him, should have imitations in gold, silver, stones, and feather-work, of all the things existing under heaven in his dominion?—gold, and silver, things, so like to nature, that there is not a silversmith in the world who could do it better; and, respecting the stones, there is no imagination which can divine the instruments with which they were so perfectly executed; and respecting the feather-work, neither in wax, nor in embroidery, could nature be so marvellously imitated.

Extent of the Aztec Sovereignty

So far, the extent of Montezuma's kingdom is not known, but everywhere within two hundred leagues on this and the other side of this capital, wherever he sent, his messengers were not disregarded,[1] although there were some provinces in the midst of these countries with which he was at war. From what has been learned, and from what I understand from him, I judge that his territories were as large as Spain; for he sent messengers from here to Puntunchan, at sixty leagues distance, beyond the river of Grijalba, ordering the natives of a city, called Cumatan,[2] to give themselves as vassals to Your Majesty; and that is a distance of two hundred and thirty leagues from the great city. This I know for I have made the Spaniards go a distance of more than a hundred and fifty in that direction.

All the other lords of this country and province, especially those of the neighbourhood, resided as I have already said, a greater part of the year in the capital,

[1] Humboldt estimates its extension at 20,000 square leagues, and as comprising in his time, the intendencies of Vera Cruz, Mexico, Oaxaca, and Valladolid.

[2] Given in Archbishop Lorenzana's edition as Jumathlan, a town between the provinces of Oaxaca and Chiapa.

and all, or at least most of them, had their first-born sons in the service of Montezuma. There were fortified places in the dominions of these lords, and Montezuma sent his own people amongst them as governors, and collectors of the taxes and rents which he received from each province. These men kept an account of what each province was obliged to give, by means of characters and figures, written on the paper they make, showing what each province was obliged to pay according to the quality of its land. In this manner, produce from all the said provinces came into his possession.

He was so feared by the present, as well as the absent, that there was never prince in the world more so. He had many pleasure houses, within and without the city, each as well constructed, to serve for its particular kind of pastime, as could be described or desired for so great a lord. Within the city, he had residences such and so marvellous that it seems to me almost impossible to speak of their excellence and grandeur. So I limit myself to saying that there is nothing comparable with them in Spain.

He had a house, a little inferior to this one, where there was a beautiful garden, with arbors overhanging it, of which the marbles and tiles were of jasper, beautifully worked. In this house there were apartments for two great princes, and all their servants. It had ten pools of water, in which were kept all the many and divers breeds of water-fowl found in these parts, all domesticated; for the sea-birds, too, there were pools of salt water, and, for those of the rivers and lakes, there was fresh water, which for the sake of cleanliness, they renewed at certain times by means of pipes. To each kind of bird they gave the food which suited its habits in its free state, so that to those which ate fish they gave it; and, likewise, worms, maize, and smaller seeds were supplied as required

Montezuma's Palaces

by the different birds. I assure Your Highness that all those birds which ate only fish received each day two hundred and fifty pounds, caught in the salt lakes. Three hundred men had the charge of these birds, for their sole employment. There were others who were occupied only in curing the birds which were ailing. Over each pool for these birds, there were beautifully decorated galleries, and corridors, where Montezuma came to amuse himself by watching them. There was an apartment in this house in which were men, women, and children, white of face, body, hair, and eyelashes from the day of their birth. There was another very beautiful house, with a large court, paved with flags, in the pattern of a chess board.

There were also houses about nine feet in height, and about six paces square; one half of each was covered with a roofing of square tiles, and the other half, which was open, had a stout lattice of wood. Each of these houses contained a bird of prey, representing all the sorts known in Spain, from the kestrel to the eagle, besides many other kinds, which had never been seen there; and there were great numbers of each of these kinds. Across the tops of these houses there was a perch, and another one out beyond the lattice, so that the birds might use the one at night and when it was raining, and the other to sun themselves, and take the air. All these birds were fed daily on chickens, with no other food. There were certain large rooms in this palace, fitted with great cages, very well constructed, and joined with heavy timbers, in all or most of which were kept lions, tigers, foxes, and every kind of cat in considerable numbers. These were also fed on chickens. Three hundred other men had charge of these animals and birds.

There was another house where many monstrous men and women lived, amongst whom there were dwarfs, hunchbacks, and deformed; and each manner of monster had a room apart, and they also had persons to take

charge of them. I do not mention the other diverting things Montezuma had in this city, because they were so many, and so various.

Etiquette of Montezuma's Court

His service was organised as follows: at dawn every day, six hundred lords, and men of rank, came to his palace. Some of these sat down, and others walked about in the halls and corridors of the palace, talking and passing the time, but without entering the room where he was; the servants and retainers who accompanied them filled two or three great courts, and the street, which was very large. They remained in attendance until night. When they served food to Montezuma, they likewise served all those lords with like profusion, and their servants and followers also received their rations. The larder and the wine cellar were open daily to all who wished to eat or drink.

The way they served the meals is this: three or four hundred youths carried in countless dishes, for, every time he wished to dine or sup, they brought him all the different dishes, not only meats, but also fish, and fruits, and herbs, to be found in the land; and as the climate is cold they brought, under each plate and dish, a brazier of coals, so that the food should not get cold. They placed all the dishes together in a great room where he dined, which was almost filled; its floors were all very well covered and very clean, and he sat on a small cushion of leather, beautifully made. Whilst he was eating, there were five or six elder lords standing a short distance from him, to whom he offered from the dishes he was eating. One of the servants waited to bring and remove the dishes for him, which were passed by others, who stood further off as the service required. At the beginning and end of each meal, they always brought him water for his hands, and the towel, once used, he never used again; nor were the plates and service in which a dish was served ever brought again; and it was the same with the braziers.

He dressed himself four times every day, in four different kinds of clothing, all new, and never would he be dressed with the same again. All the lords who entered his palace came barefooted, and, when those whom he had summoned appeared before him, it was with their heads bent, and their eyes on the ground, in humble posture; and, when they spoke to him, they did not look him in the face, because of respect and reverence. I know they did this out of respect, for certain lords reproved the Spaniards, saying, that when these latter spoke to me, they would behave with a lofty demeanour, looking me in the face, which seemed to them disrespectful and shameless. When Montezuma went out, which happened rarely, all those who accompanied him and those whom he met in the street, turned their faces aside, and in no wise looked at him, and all the rest prostrated themselves until he had passed. One of the lords, who carried three long thin rods, always went before him, and I believe this was done to give notice of his approach. When he descended from his litter, he took one of those rods in his hand, and carried it as far as he went. The ceremonies which this sovereign used in his service were so many, and of such different kinds, that more space than I have at present would be required to relate them, and even a better memory to retain them; for I believe none of the Sultans, or any infidel sovereign of whom we have had information until now, has ever had such ceremonial in his court.

I have been occupied in this capital in what seemed to conduce to the service of Your Sacred Majesty, and in pacifying and winning over to it many provinces, thickly peopled countries, very great cities, towns, and forts; and in discovering mines, and learning and inquiring into many of the secrets of Montezuma's dominions, as well as of others which border on them, of which he had information. These are so many and so marvellous, that they are almost incredible. In this, I have been

assisted, with as much good will and satisfaction on the part of Montezuma and the natives, as if they, *ab initio*, had recognised Your Sacred Majesty as their king and rightful sovereign; and with no less good will have they done all I commanded them in your royal name. In all these things mentioned, and in others no less useful to the service of Your Highness, I spent from the eighth of November, 1519, to the beginning of May this present year.

News of the Arrival of Narvaez

While all was quiet and tranquil in this city, and many Spaniards were distributed through divers parts, pacifying the people in the country, I greatly desired that ships might arrive, with the answer to the account I had sent to Your Majesty, so that I might forward what I now send, together with all the gold and jewels I had collected for Your Highness. At that time there came certain natives, vassals of Montezuma, who live on the coast, telling me that, near the mountain chain of San Martin, which is on the said coast, before reaching the port and bay of San Juan, eighteen ships had arrived; and that they did not know whose they were, because, as soon as they espied them on the sea, they came to let me know. Following the said Indians, there came also a native of the island of Fernandina, who brought me a letter from a Spaniard, whom I had stationed on the coast. This I had done that he might give information about me, and about that town near the port, to any ships that might arrive, so that they might not be lost. In this letter he said that, "on such a day, a single ship had arrived off the harbour of San Juan," and that he had examined all the coast as far as the eye could reach, but had discovered no other, and therefore believed it to be the ship I had sent to Your Majesty, since it was time for this to return. In order to satisfy himself more fully, he said that he would stay, waiting for the arrival of

the said ship in port, so as to get information which he would immediately bring me.

Having read this letter, I despatched two Spaniards one by one road, and the other by another, so that they might miss no messenger coming from the ship. I directed them to go to the said port, and ascertain how many ships had arrived, from whence they came, and what they brought, and to return as quickly as possible to tell me. I likewise sent another to the city of Vera Cruz, to announce what I had learned about those ships, so that they might get information there, and let me know; and another went to the Captain (whom I had sent with a hundred and fifty men, to form a settlement at the port of Quacucalco), to whom I wrote, that, as I had learned that certain ships had arrived at the port, he should stop wherever that messenger might meet him, and not proceed any further, until I should write to him again. It afterwards appeared, however, that he already knew of the arrival of the ships when he received my letter.

Fifteen days elapsed after the departure of the messengers, and as I had no news or answers from them, I was not a little alarmed. When these fifteen days had passed, other Indians, also vassals of Montezuma, arrived, from whom I learned that the said ships had already anchored in the port of San Juan, and the people had disembarked; that they had brought about eighty horses, eight hundred men, and ten or twelve pieces of artillery. All of this report was pictured on paper of the country, to be shown to Montezuma. The messengers also told me, that the Spaniard I had stationed on the coast, and the other messengers I had sent, were with the said people, and had told these Indians that the captain of those people would not allow them to return, and for them to tell me this. Having heard this, I determined to send a religious, whom I had brought in my company, bearing a letter of

mine, and another from the alcalde and the municipal officers of the city of Vera Cruz who were with me, addressed to the captain and people who had arrived at that port. In these letters we informed him very fully of all that had happened to me in this country; that I held many cities and ports conquered and pacified, subject to the royal service of Your Majesty; that I had taken the principal lord of all these regions prisoner, and that I was in the capital. We wrote all about its character, and the gold and jewels I had obtained for Your Highness, and how I had given an account to Your Majesty of the country. I asked them to let me know who they were, and if they were rightful subjects of the kingdom and lordships of Your Highness, to write to me whether they had come to this country by a royal mandate to settle permanently, or intended to advance or return; adding that, if they needed anything, I would have them provided with everything possible. I said also that, if they came from any place outside the dominions and kingdoms of Your Highness, to likewise let me know, for if they needed anything I would also supply it, if I could. If they refused to inform me, I required them on the part of Your Majesty to leave your countries, and not to land in them, with the threat that, if they persisted, I would march against them with all the force I had, both Spaniards and natives, and would take them, and kill them as foreign invaders of the kingdoms and dominions of my king and sovereign.

Designs of Panfilo de Narvaez

Within five or six days after the religious had gone with the despatch, twenty Spaniards, whom I had left in the city of Vera Cruz, arrived in the city of Temixtitan, and brought me a cleric and two other laymen whom they had taken in the said city. From them I learned, that the armada and people in the port belonged to Diego Velasquez, and had come by his orders, under a certain

Panfilo de Narvaez,[1] a householder of the island of Fernandina, as their captain; that they brought eighty horses, many pieces of artillery, and eight hundred soldiers, among which latter were eighty musketeers, and a hundred and twenty bowmen; that Narvaez came with a commission as Captain-General, and Lieutenant-Governor of all these parts, by appointment of Diego Velasquez, with faculties from Your Majesty for all this; that the messengers I had sent, and the man I had stationed on the coast were with Panfilo de Narvaez, who would not allow them to return, and that he had information himself from them about my founding that town twelve leagues from the said port, and of the people who were in it, as well as about the people I had sent to Quacucalco, thirty leagues from the port, in a province called Tuchitepeque, I learned also that Narvaez knew of everything I had done in the country in the service of Your Highness; about the cities and towns I had pacified and about the great city of Temixtitan; about the gold and jewels we had obtained in the country, and all else that had happened to me. Narvaez had sent these men to Vera Cruz, to try to win over the inhabitants to his design that they should rebel against me. They brought me more than a hundred letters which Narvaez and his companions sent to people in Vera Cruz, telling them to credit what the cleric and the others with him would say in his name, promising them in the name of Diego Velasquez, that, if they would do so, they should be rewarded, but that

[1] Panfilo de Narvaez, a native of Valladolid, first settled in Jamaica, afterwards taking part in the conquest of Cuba, as captain of thirty bowmen, when he won the friendship of Diego Velasquez, who made him one of his chief captains. Las Casas describes him as well behaved, and brave but imprudent, but Bernal Diaz's opinion of him was less pleasing as he calls him vain, presumptuous, foolish, and proud, but admits his bravery. He was forty years old when he came to Mexico to arrest Cortes and send him back to Cuba. He brought with him the curse of small-pox, which was thus introduced into Mexico by a negro of his crew.

those who acted to the contrary would be very severely treated. Many other things contained in the said letters were reported by the cleric and those who came with him.

Almost simultaneously, there arrived one of the Spaniards who had gone to Quacucalco, bringing letters from his captain, one Velasquez de Leon, who informed me that the expedition in the port was under Panfilo de Narvaez, who came in the name of Diego Velasquez. This Leon forwarded me a letter which Narvaez had sent him by an Indian for he was a relative of Diego Velasquez, and brother-in-law of Narvaez), telling him how he had learned from my messengers that Leon was there with those people, and bidding him come back immediately with them, because, by so acting, he would fulfil his obligations towards his relative; that he believed I held him by force, and other similar things which Narvaez wrote to him. The captain being more devoted to Your Majesty's service, not only declined to accept what Narvaez told him in his letter, but, after having sent the letter to me, immediately left to join me with all his forces. Afterwards I informed myself from that cleric, and the two who accompanied him, respecting many things concerning the intentions of Diego Velasquez and Narvaez; how they had despatched that armada and force against me, because, instead of to Diego Velasquez, I had sent to Your Majesty the description of this country, and the presents; and how they came with evil designs to kill me, and many of my company whom they had already designated. I ascertained likewise that the licentiate Figueroa, the judge residing in the island of Hispaniola, and Your Highness's judges and officials there, when they learned that Diego Velasquez was preparing this armada, and his intention in so doing, had perceived the harm and injury which would result to Your Majesty by their coming, and had sent one of the said judges, the licentiate, Lucas

Vasquez de Ayllon,[1] with powers to require and order Diego Velasquez not to despatch the armada. Upon his arrival, he found Diego Velasquez and all those armed people at the point of the island of Fernandina, ready to sail, and he required them, and those composing the armada, not to depart, because Your Highness would be badly served, and he threatened them with many penalties, notwithstanding which, and in spite of all the licentiate required and ordered, Velasquez still sent the armada. The licentiate, Ayllon, had come with them thinking to prevent the harm which would follow from the arrival of it, for it was notorious to him, and to everybody, that the armada came with evil intentions.

I sent this cleric to Narvaez with a letter of mine, in which I told him I had learned from the cleric, and those who came with him, that he was captain of the armada,

[1] The *audiencia* of San Domingo, foreseeing the scandal which was inevitable from such an expedition against Cortes, sent Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon to Cuba with full powers to stop the preparations, and prohibit the sailing. Ayllon followed Diego Velasquez to the port of Trinidad where he had gone, and there learned that Narvaez was at Xagua, some fourteen leagues distant, ready to join the others of the fleet who were at Guaniguanico. He also discovered that most of the able-bodied men in the colony had enlisted, and that the island would be left with few defenders in case of trouble with the natives; he went therefore to Xagua, and notified Narvaez not to sail, but to go to Guaniguanico, where he intended to dissuade the governor from the undertaking. Though Velasquez appeared at first to yield, he ended by repudiating the authority of the *audiencia*, though he consented to give pacific instructions to Narvaez as to his manner of dealing with Cortes. Ayllon decided, at the last moment, to go himself with the armada, and prevent trouble between the rival commanders if possible. Narvaez however was heedless of the notary's protests at San Juan de Ulua, and finally rid himself of his importunities by sending him back to Cuba on one ship, and his secretary and the alguacil on another. Thus, three months after his departure on his mission, Ayllon landed at San Nicolas in San Domingo, making his way as best he could on foot across the island to report his ill success to the *audiencia*. This flouting of the *audiencia* cost Diego Velasquez any triumph he might otherwise have hoped to gain over Cortes, and Narvaez's summary violence towards a representative of the government bears out Bernal Diaz's estimate of his character.

and that I was glad it was he, as I had thought otherwise seeing that my messengers had not returned. I said, however, that, as he knew I was in this country in Your Highness's service, I marvelled that he did not write to me, or send me some messenger announcing his arrival, for he knew that I would be rejoiced at it, not only because of our old friendship, but also because he had come to serve Your Highness, which was what I most desired. Instead of which, I said, he had sent corruptors and letters of seduction to those under me in Your Majesty's service, inciting them to rebel against me, and join him, as if we were infidels the one, and Christians the other, vassals of Your Highness the one, and traitors the other. I asked him as a favour that from hence forward he would not use these means with me, but first let me know the cause of his coming. I said I had been told that he called himself Captain-General, and Lieutenant-Governor for Diego Velasquez, and that he had so proclaimed himself by the public crier, publishing it in the country, and had named alcaldes and municipal officers, and had executed justice, all of which was against the good service of Your Highness, and against all your laws; that this was so because this country belonging to Your Majesty, and being peopled by your vassals, and having tribunals and municipal bodies in it, he should not appropriate to himself the said offices without first having received them, inasmuch as to exercise them he should bring provisions from Your Majesty; that, if he had brought any such, I asked as a favour, and required him to present them to me, and to the municipal authorities of Vera Cruz, as they would be obeyed by those authorities, and by me, as letters and provisions of our King and rightful Sovereign, and complied with as far as it would profit to the service of Your Majesty; and that I was in that city, where I held the monarch prisoner, and

Cortes Writes to Narvaez

had a great sum of gold and valuables, belonging not only to Your Highness, but also to my company and myself, which I did not dare to leave, since I feared that, if I left the city, the people might rebel, and such a quantity of gold and jewels, and such a city, would be lost which meant the loss of the whole country. I likewise gave a letter to the said cleric for the licentiate Ayllon, who, as I afterwards learned, had been sent away, with two ships as a prisoner, by Narvaez before the cleric arrived.

On the day the cleric left, I received a messenger from the citizens of Vera Cruz, who informed me, that all the natives had risen in favour of Narvaez, especially those of the city of Cempoal and their party, and that none would come to work in the said town and port, nor do anything else, because they said that Narvaez had told them that I was a traitor, and that he had come to take me and all my company prisoners, and to make us leave the country. As Narvaez's people were many, and mine few, and he had brought many horses, and much artillery, and I had little, they wished to be on the winning side. The messengers informed me also that they had learned from the Indians, that Narvaez would occupy the city of Cempoal, knowing how near it was to their city, and they believed from what they were informed of the said Narvaez's bad intentions towards all, that he would from that place attack them, aided by the Cempoalans. They let me know that they were leaving the town, rather than fight with them, and to avoid scandal they would go up the mountain to the house of a chief, vassal of Your Highness, and our friend, where they would remain until I sent them directions what to do.

As I saw the great mischief which was spreading, and that the country was rebelling on account of Narvaez, it appeared to me that, by going to him myself, all might be appeased, because the Indians would not dare to

rebel on seeing me, and also because I thought to make some sort of arrangement with Narvaez for stopping the great evil at the outset. I thereupon started the same day, leaving the fort well provided with maize and water, and a garrison of five hundred men, with some cannon. Taking the others (some seventy men), I pursued my road, accompanied by some of Montezuma's principal people.

Before I left, I made some explanation telling him "to look to the fact that he was a vassal of Your Highness, and that now he would receive the favours from Your Majesty for the services which he had rendered to you; that I entrusted to him those Spaniards, who would take care of all the gold and valuables which he had given me, or ordered me to give Your Highness; that I was longing to see the people who had arrived, and to learn who they were, as I did not yet know, but that I believed they were bad people and not vassals of Your Highness. He promised to provide those left behind with everything necessary and to take great care of all I left there, belonging to Your Majesty, and that his people who went with me would guide me by a road without quitting his country, and would provide me with everything I needed. He prayed me also, that, if these were bad people, to let him know, and he would immediately raise many warriors to attack them, and drive them out of the country. I thanked him for all this, and assured him that Your Majesty would order many favours to be shown him, and I gave many jewels and stuffs to him, to his son, and to many other lords who were with him at the time.

Cortes Leaves Mexico to Meet Narvaez

In the city, called Churultecal, I met, returning with all his people, Juan Velasquez, the captain, whom, as I have said, I had sent to Quacucalco. Separating those who were indisposed, whom I sent to the city, I pursued my road with him and the others. Fifteen leagues

beyond the city of Churultecal, I encountered that religious father [Fray Olmedo] of my company, whom I had sent to the port to learn what sort of people had come in the armada. He brought me a letter from Narvaez, in which the latter wrote me that he brought certain powers to hold this country for Diego Velasquez, and that I should immediately come to him to obey and submit to them, and that he had established a town with alcaldes and municipal officers. From the same religious, I learned that the licentiate Ayllon, as well as his notary and alguacil, had been taken, and sent away in two ships; that he himself had been approached there by parties, to win over some of my company to Narvaez; and how they had boasted before him, and certain Indians who accompanied him, of their forces, both of foot and cavalry, and had fired the artillery from the ships and on land in order to frighten them, saying to the religious, "See! how can you defend yourselves against us if you don't do as we wish you to do?" He told me also that he had seen with Narvaez one of the native lords of this country, vassal of the said Montezuma, and governor of all his country along the coast; and he learned that he had spoken to Narvaez on the part of Montezuma, giving him jewels of gold, and that Narvaez had also given him certain trifles; and that Narvaez had sent from there certain messengers to Montezuma, saying, that he would deliver him, for he had come to take me and all my company, and then leave the country, and that he wished no gold, but that, myself, and those who were with me, once prisoners, he intended to depart, and leave the country and the natives in their full liberty. Finally I learned that his intention was to possess himself of the country by his own authority, without asking recognition from anyone; and that if I and those of my company refused to accept him as captain, or justice in the name of Diego Velasquez, he would come against

us, and capture us by force, and that for this purpose he had confederated with the natives, especially with Montezuma, by means of his messengers.

When I saw how manifest was the harm which would result from the aforesaid proceedings against Your Majesty, especially as I was told of the great force he had brought, and Diego Velasquez's mandate that, as soon as he seized us, he should hang me, and others who were designated, I did not hesitate to approach nearer to him, believing that I might make him understand the great disservice which would result to Your Highness, and dissuade him from his evil intention and malicious disposition towards us.

I continued my way, and fifteen leagues before arriving at the city of Cempoal, where Narvaez was camped, there approached me the chaplain sent to me by the citizens of Vera Cruz, by whom I had written to Narvaez, and the licentiate Ayllon; he was accompanied by another cleric, and a certain Andres de Duero,[1] householder of the Island of Fernandina, who had also come with Narvaez. They told me, on the part of Narvaez, in answer to my letter, that I might still obey and recognise him as my captain, and that I must yield the country to him, otherwise I should be punished, as Narvaez brought great forces with him, and I had very few, for besides the many Spaniards he had brought, most of the natives were in his favour; and that, if I would deliver the country to him, he would give me all the ships and provisions I desired, and would allow me to go away with them, and all those who wished to leave with me, taking everything I desired without any hindrance from him. One of the clerics told me that Diego Velasquez had authorised this offer, and had given his instructions to Narvaez and the two clerics jointly, so that, in this matter, they could make all the concessions I wished. I answered, that I did not

[1] A secretary of Diego Velasquez.

perceive any warrants of Your Highness, directing me to deliver the country to them, and that if Narvaez brought any he should present them before me and the Municipal Council of Vera Cruz, according to Spanish law and custom, when I would be ready to obey and comply with them; but that, until then, I would not do as he said for any interest or concession, for I, and those who were with me, would rather die in defence of the country, which we had won and held pacified and sure for Your Majesty, than turn traitors, or forfeit our loyalty to our king. They advanced many other propositions to win me over to their project, but none would I accept without having seen the warrants of Your Highness authorising me so to do; and these they could not produce

In conclusion, these clerics, Andres de Duero, and myself, agreed that Narvaez and myself, with as many others, should meet with perfect surety on both sides, when he would satisfy me of the warrants if he had brought any, and I would give my answer. I, on my part, sent him a safe conduct, signed, and he also sent me another, signed with his name, which as it seemed to me he had no thought of observing; for he had planned that, during the visit, some way or other should be found to kill me suddenly, and two of the ten who were to come with him had been designated to do this, while the rest were to fight with my attendants. They said, as a reason for this, that, once I was dead, their business could be finished; and in truth it would have been, if God, who in such cases intervenes, had not succoured me by a certain warning, which one of those concerned in the treachery had sent me together with their safe conduct.

Negotiations with Narvaez

Knowing all this, I wrote a letter to Narvaez, and another to the three commissioners, telling them that I had discovered their treacherous intention, and would not go as had been agreed. I immediately sent them certain requisitions and mandates, by which I required

Narvaez to make known to me any warrants he brought from Your Highness, and that, until he had done so, he should not, under certain penalties I imposed, call himself captain or justice, or meddle with any duties pertaining to the said offices. In like manner, by the same mandate I commanded all the persons who were with him not to regard nor obey him as captain or justice, and summoned them, within a certain time designated, to appear before me, that I might instruct them what was proper to do in Your Highness's service. I gave notice that, if they did otherwise, I should proceed against them as perfidious traitors and wicked vassals who had rebelled against their king, and sought to usurp his country and dominions, to deliver them to persons to whom they did not belong, and who had no claim nor right to them; and also in the execution of this order, that if they did not appear before me, or obey my mandate, I would proceed against them, and imprison them according to the law. Narvaez's answer was to imprison the notary who delivered the mandate, and the persons accompanying him, and to take from them certain Indians who accompanied them, who were all detained till another messenger arrived whom I sent to inquire after them. Before them he made a display of force, and threatened them, and also myself, if I did not deliver the country to him.

Seeing that I could by no means prevent this great calamity and evil, and that the natives of the country were revolting, and rising day by day, recommending myself to God, and disregarding all injury that might follow, considering that if I died in the service of my king, and in the defence and upholding of his countries against usurpation, more than sufficient glory would cover me and my company, I gave my mandate to Gonzalo de Sandoval, alguacil mayor, to seize the persons of Narvaez, and those who called themselves alcaldes and municipal officers. I placed eighty men under his orders,

to make the arrest, while I, with the remaining hundred and seventy (as in all we were two hundred and fifty men), followed on foot, without artillery or horses, so as to aid him if Narvaez and his companions should resist. On the same day, the alguacil mayor and I, with the rest of the people, arrived near the city of Cempoal, where Narvaez and his people were quartered. He learned of our coming, and came out, with eighty horsemen, and five hundred foot-soldiers, leaving the rest of his force in his quarters, which were in the great mosque of that strongly fortified city. Having marched to within almost a league of where we were, and not finding us, he believed he had been deceived, so he returned to his quarters, holding all his people in readiness, and placing two sentinels almost a league outside the town.

As I wished to avoid all scandal, it seemed to me that there would be less if I went by night, unperceived if possible, directly to the quarters of Narvaez, which I and my men knew very well, and there seized him. For, once he was a prisoner, no trouble would arise, for the others wished to submit to justice, especially as most of them had been forced to come by Diego Velasquez, fearing that, unless they did, he might take away their slaves in the island of Fernandina. Thus it happened, on the feast of Pentecost, a little after midnight, I attacked the quarters. I had encountered the sentinels Narvaez had placed, and my vanguard captured one of them, from whom I informed myself of their position, but the other escaped; and in order that he should not arrive before me and give notice of my coming, I hastened as much as possible. The sentinel arrived, however, almost half an hour before me, and, when I approached, Narvaez and all his men were already armed, and had saddled their horses, and were well prepared, with two hundred men guarding each quarter. We moved so

Cortes Defeats Narvaez

quietly, that, when they heard us, and seized arms, I was already inside the courtyard of his quarters, where all the people were gathered. They had taken possession of three or four strong towers which were in it, and all the other strong positions; and in one of the towers, where Narvaez was lodged, he had placed nineteen guns on the stairs. We reached the top of the tower so quickly, that they had not time to put fire to more than one of the pieces, which by God's will did not go off, or do us any harm. Thus we mounted the tower to the place where Narvaez slept, where about fifty men who were with him fought with the alguacil mayor and his force; and although required many times to yield themselves to Your Highness, surrendered only when fire was set to the tower. While the alguacil mayor was capturing Narvaez, I, with those who had stayed with me, defended the entrance of the tower against the rest who sought to come to his aid; and I ordered the artillery to be taken, and fortified myself with it. Thus, with no more loss than two men, who were killed by the discharge of a gun, all those we wished to take were made prisoners within an hour. After the rest had been disarmed, they promised to be obedient to the laws of Your Majesty, declaring that till then they had been deceived, as they had been told that Narvaez brought warrants from Your Highness, and that I had risen in rebellion in this country, and was a traitor to Your Majesty, together with many other similar things.

As all now understood the truth, and the bad intentions and wicked disposition of Diego Velasquez and of Narvaez came to light, they rejoiced very greatly that God should have ordained and provided such an ending. For I assure Your Majesty, that, if God had not mysteriously intervened, and had Narvaez been victorious it would have been the greatest injury which for a long time past Spaniards had done to one another.

Narvaez would have fulfilled his intention, as Diego Velasquez commanded him, which was to hang me, and many others of my company, so that no one should recount what had happened. And, according to what I learn from the Indians, they had perceived, that, if Narvaez were to capture me, as he had told them, it could not be without loss to himself and his people, nor without many of us perishing; so that they meanwhile could kill those whom I had left in Temixtitan, which, indeed, they attempted to do. Afterwards they intended to join forces, and attack those who remained here, and free their country, so that not even a memory of the Spaniards should survive. Your Highness may be assured that if they had achieved all this, and succeeded in their designs, this country, which has now been conquered and pacified, would not have been recovered within twenty years.

As so many people could not be maintained together in this city, both because of its being nearly destroyed, and because it had been plundered by Narvaez, and abandoned by its inhabitants, two days after Narvaez had been taken prisoner, I sent two captains, with two hundred men each, one to go to the town and port of Cucicacalco, which as I have told Your Highness, I had founded, and the other to that river which the people from Francisco de Garay's ships said they had seen, for I now hold them securely. I likewise sent two hundred other men to the city of Vera Cruz, where I ordered Narvaez's ships to go. I remained with the rest of the people in Cempoal, to provide whatever Your Majesty's service required. I also sent a messenger to the city of Temixtitan, by whom I made known to the Spaniards I left there what had happened to me.

These messengers returned within twelve days, bringing me letters from the alcalde[1] there, telling me that the

[1] See Appendix VI., close of letter.

Indians had assaulted the fort on all sides, and set fire to it in many parts; that they had sunk mines, and that our people had been in much trouble and danger; and that, if Montezuma did not order the war to cease, they would yet perish, for they were closely surrounded, though there was no fighting, and no one could go two paces outside the fort. In the fight, the Indians had captured a great part of the provisions I had left them, and had burned my four brigantines. My men were in extreme need, and begged me for the love of God to come to their succour in all possible haste. Seeing the extremity in which these Spaniards were, and that if I did not rescue them, besides the Indians killing them, and taking all the gold, and silver, and valuables, which I had obtained in the country, belonging to Your Majesty and also to me and the Spaniards, the noblest and greatest city recently discovered in the world would be lost, and with it all else that had been gained, for it was the capital to which all gave obedience. I immediately sent messengers to the captains whom I had sent off with expeditions, telling them what had been written me from the capital, and directing them to return immediately from wherever they were found, and to come by the shortest route to the province of Tlascaltecal, where I, with the people, and all the artillery in my power, and the seventy horsemen, would unite with them. When we joined forces, and made a review, there were found to be seventy horsemen, and five hundred foot soldiers.

News from the Garrison in Mexico

I started in all haste with these troops for the capital, and the whole length of the road there never appeared anybody from Montezuma to receive me, as was customary, and all the country had risen, and was almost deserted, which aroused evil suspicions lest the Spaniards whom I had left in the city were dead, and the natives had gathered to await me at some pass, where they would

take me at a disadvantage. Thus, fearful, I advanced with the utmost precaution until I reached the city of Tesnacan,[1] which, as I have already recounted to Your Majesty, is on the shore of that great lake. I inquired of some of the natives there about the Spaniards who had remained in the great city, and was told that they were alive. I asked them to bring me a canoe, as I wished to send a Spaniard to obtain information, and said that while he was gone, one of the natives of the said city, who seemed to be a chief, must remain with me, because none of the lords and chiefs whom I knew appeared. The chief sent for the canoe, and dispatched certain Indians with the Spaniards whom I was sending, while he remained with me; but while this Spaniard was embarking to go to the city of Temixtitan, he saw another canoe coming across the lake, and waited in port until it arrived. In it came one of the Spaniards who had remained in the city, from whom I learned that they were all alive, except five or six whom the Indians had killed, and that the others were still besieged, and were not allowed to come out of the fort, nor did the Indians provide them with anything needful except on payment, and at a heavy price. Afterwards, however, when they heard of my coming, they had behaved somewhat better towards them, Montezuma saying that he waited only for my arrival, in order that they might again be free of the city as they used to be. Montezuma also dispatched a messenger to me with the said Spaniard, by whom he sent me word that he believed I already knew what had happened in that city, and that as he thought I might be angry on account of it, and inclined to vengeance, he besought me to put aside my anger because he was as much grieved as I, and that nothing had been done by his wish or consent. He sent me news of many other

[1] Texcoco.

things, to appease the anger he supposed I felt for what had happened, desiring me to come to the city and saying that whatever I ordered would be complied with no less than before. I sent him word to say that I was not angry with him in any way, as his good will was well known to me, and that I would do as he desired.

The next day, which was the eve of St. John Baptist, [1] I left, and slept on the road, three leagues from the capital, and on St. John's Day, after having heard Mass, I entered about noon, and saw few people about the city. Some of the gates at the cross streets and entrances to the streets had been removed, which I did not like, although I thought that it had been done from fear, and that my arrival would reassure them. I marched directly to the fort, in which, and in the principal mosque adjoining, all my people were quartered; and those within the fort received us with as much joy as if we had given them anew their lives, which they had already looked upon as lost, and we rejoiced all that day and night, believing that peace had been restored.

Cortes Re-enters Mexico

The next day after Mass I sent a messenger to Vera Cruz, to give them the good news that the Christians were alive, and that I was safe in the city. The messenger returned within half an hour, with his head all bruised and broken, calling out that the Indians in the city were in array of battle, and had raised all the bridges; and, immediately after him, such a great multitude fell upon us from all sides, that neither the roofs nor the houses could be seen for the crowd, which came on with the greatest shoutings, and most frightful yells which could be conceived in the world. With their slings, they threw so many stones into the fortress, that it seemed as if they rained from the heavens, while arrows and missiles were so thick, that all the buildings and courts were so full

[1] Day before St. John's Day, which fell on Sunday, June 23.

of them we could hardly move about. I sallied forth against them on two or three sides, where they fought us very valiantly, and in one place, where a captain had gone out with two hundred men, they killed four, and wounded him and many others, before he could retreat. On the other side, where I was engaged, they wounded me, and many other Spaniards. We killed few of them, for they retreated to the other side of the bridges, and from the roofs and terraces did us much injury with stones. Some terraces we captured and set on fire; but they were so many and so strong, and so filled with people, well supplied with stones and other kinds of weapons, that we were not strong enough to take them all, nor to defend ourselves against their attack at their pleasure. They attacked the fort so violently, and set fire to it in so many places, that on one side a great part was destroyed without our being able to prevent it, until we stopped it by breaking the walls, and pulling down a part which put out the fire. Had it not been for the strong guard of musketeers and archers with some field pieces I placed there, they would have scaled that part without our being able to resist them. Thus we fought all that day until night was well advanced, and even throughout the night they kept up their cries and yells. During the night, I had those breaches caused by the fire repaired, and all the rest of the fort which seemed weak to me; and I distributed the watch and the guards, for on the next day we would have to fight stoutly; and I cared for more than eighty wounded.

Death of Montezuma

At dawn the following day, the enemy opened the battle more stoutly than the day before, there being such a number of them that the artillery had no need to aim but just to shoot into the mases of Indians. Although the artillery did much damage, for thirteen arquebuses were playing, besides muskets and archery which were also doing service

it seemed as if they did not feel it, for when one discharge would sweep away ten or twelve men, more would immediately fill their places, as if it had done no harm at all. Leaving the necessary guard, such as could be spared, in the fort, I again made a sortie, and captured some bridges, and burnt some houses, killing many of the defenders; but they were so numerous that, although we did them a good deal of damage, we made very little impression on them. We had to fight all day long, while they fought by hours, because they relieved one another, and even thus they had more than enough men. That day, they also wounded some fifty or sixty Spaniards, although none of them died; and I fought until nightfall, retiring only from sheer fatigue into the fort. Seeing the great damage the enemy did us, and how they wounded and killed us at will, and that, although we did much injury amongst them, it was hardly perceptible on account of their number, we spent that whole night and the next day in making three engines of wood, each accommodating twenty men, so that they could not hurt us throwing stones from the roofs, for the engines were covered with planks. Inside there were archers and musketeers, and others armed with pikes, pickaxes and bars of iron for making breaches in the houses, and knocking down the barricades which the Indians had made in the streets. While these machines were being made, the combat with our adversaries did not cease, for whenever we went out of the fort, they would strive to enter, being repulsed only with great difficulty, Montezuma, who with one of his sons and many other chiefs who had been captured at the beginning, was still a prisoner, asked to be carried to the roof of the fort where he could speak to the captains and the people, and cause the war to cease. I had him taken thither, and when he reached the parapet on the top of the fort, intending to speak to the people who were fighting there,

one of his own subjects struck him on the head with a stone, with such force that within three days he died. I then had him taken out, dead as he was, by two of the Indian prisoners, who bore him away to his people; but I do not know what they did with him, except that the war did not cease, but went on more stoutly and more fiercely every day.[1]

That same day, they called me to the place where they had wounded Montezuma, saying that certain captains wished to speak to me. I went, and there passed many arguments between us, I beseeching them not to fight with me because there was no reason for it, as they must perceive the benefits they had received from me, and how they had been well treated by me. Their answer was that I must depart and leave them their country, and then the war would cease, and that otherwise I might be sure that they would either die, or finish us. It appears they did this to draw me out of the fort, so that they might, at their pleasure, trap me between the bridges, while in the act of leaving the city. I answered that they must not think I begged for peace from fear of them, but because I was grieved at the damage I had done them and would still have to do them; and also for the destruction of such a beautiful city. Still they answered that they would not cease to make war upon me until I left the city.

After having completed the engines, I sallied out the next day to capture certain roofs and bridges, carrying the engines before us, followed by four pieces of artillery, many archers and shield bearers, and more than three thousand natives of Tascaltecal who had come with me and helped the Spaniards. When we reached one of the bridges, we placed the engines and scaling ladders against the walls of the terraces, in order to scale them; but the defenders of the said bridges and terraces were so nu-

[1] Appendix VII., death of Montezuma.

merous, and threw so many and such large stones at us from above, that they injured the engines and killed some of the Spaniards, and wounded many without our being able to advance one pace, although we struggled for it, fighting from morning till noon, when we returned to the fort with infinite sorrow. Their courage was increased so much by this, that they attacked us almost at the very doors, and occupied the great temple; about five hundred who appeared to me to be notable persons, ascended the highest and principal tower, carrying up a large supply of bread and water and other stores. Most of them had very long lances with very broad points, all longer and broader than ours, and not less sharpened[1] and from there they did great injury to the people in the fort, for they were very near it. Two or three times the Spaniards attacked the tower and attempted to mount it, but, as it was very high, and the ascent very steep, being a hundred and odd steps, and those above were well supplied with stones and other arms, and favoured by the fact that we could not capture the neighbouring terraces, every time the Spaniards attempted to ascend they were rolled back beaten, and many were wounded. Others of the enemy who saw this from other parts took fresh courage, so that they attacked the fort fiercely.

Cortes Captures the Great Teocalli

Observing that if they succeeded in holding that tower, besides doing us much injury from it, they also gained fresh courage to attack us, I sallied out from the fort, although my left hand was maimed by a wound which I had received on the first day. I advanced to the tower with some Spaniards who followed me, and easily succeeded in surrounding the base, although those who surrounded it were not idle, as they had to fight the

[1] Obsidian, a hard black stone capable of taking an edge as keen as a razor.

adversaries on all sides, who, for the purpose of helping their own men, came in increased numbers. And I began to ascend the tower, followed by some Spaniards, but they defended the ascent very stubbornly, throwing down three or four of my followers. With the help of God, and His Glorious Mother (for whose house that tower had been set aside, her image being placed in it), we reached the top, where we fought them so stoutly that they were forced to jump down on some terraces about a pace broad which extended round it. This tower had three or four of these terraces about sixteen feet one above the other. Some of the enemy fell all the way down, and, in addition to the injuries they received in the fall, were immediately killed by the Spaniards who surrounded the base of the tower. Those who remained on the terrace fought so valiantly, that we were more than three hours in completely dispatching them; and not one escaped. Your Sacred Majesty may believe that we captured this tower only because God had clipped their wings; because twenty of them were sufficient to resist the ascent of a thousand men even though they fought very valiantly till death. I had the tower set on fire, as well as others in the mosque, from which they had already taken away and carried off the images we had placed in them.[1]

Some of their pride was taken out of them by our obtaining this advantage, so that they fell back a little on all sides, and I afterwards returned to the roof, and spoke to the captains who had talked with me before, and who were somewhat dismayed by what they had seen. They immediately appeared, and I told them to look about and see that they could not hold out anywhere, and that every day we did them great harm and killed

[1] The cathedral of Mexico stands on this site, and the statue of the Blessed Virgin which Cortes first placed in the Aztec temple is said to be the one now venerated in the Church of los Remedios near Tacuba.

many, and that we were forced to burn and destroy their city, for I would not stop till there was nothing left of it or them. They answered, that they saw very well that they had sustained much damage from us, and that many of them had perished, but that they were already all fully determined to die, or be rid of us, and that I might behold how all these streets and squares and terraces were filled with people, who were so numerous that they had made their calculations that, if twenty-five thousand of them perished for every one of ours, they would finish with us first, for we were few and they were many. They told me all the high roads leading to the entrances to the city had been destroyed (as, in fact, they had destroyed all save one), and that we had no way of escape save by water; and that they knew very well that, as we had few provisions and little fresh water, we could not hold out much longer, for we would die by hunger, even if they did not kill us. In truth they were right, for, though we had no other enemy save starvation and the want of provisions, these would suffice to kill us in a short time. We exchanged many other arguments, each sustaining his own side.

When night set in, I sallied forth with certain Spaniards, and, as we took them by surprise, we captured a street from them, burning more than three hundred houses. I quickly returned by another street, while the people had assembled in that one, in which I also burned many houses; especially some terraces which overlooked the fort, from which they did us much damage. They were greatly frightened by what we had done that night; and during the same night I ordered the engines, which had been damaged the day before, to be repaired.

In order to follow up the victory God had given us, I sallied forth at daybreak into the same street where we had been routed the day before, where I found not less resistance than on the former occasion. As our lives

and honour were at stake, and that street led to the only sound causeway extending to the mainland (though, before reaching it, we had to pass by eight very large and deep bridges, and in all the street there were many quite high terraces and towers) we set our determination and spirit in it, so that, God helping us, we gained four of them that day, and burned all the terraces, and houses, and towers, to the last of the bridges. They had, however, during the night before, made a number of very strong barricades of adobes and clay at all the bridges, so that the discharges of arrows from the crossbows could do them no harm. We filled in the bridges with the adobes and earth from the enclosures, and with a quantity of stones and wood from the houses we had burned, although this work was not done without danger, and many Spaniards were wounded. That night I took many precautions to guard those bridges so that they might not return and retake them.

The next morning I again sallied forth, and God gave us likewise such good fortune and victory, although innumerable people defended the bridges, and many strong barricades which they had made during the night before, yet we captured them all, and filled them up. At the same time certain horsemen followed victoriously in pursuit of the fugitives as far as the mainland. While I was engaged in repairing the bridges, and in having them filled up, I was called in great haste, being told that the Indians who attacked the fort were suing for peace, and that certain chiefs and captains of them were awaiting me. Leaving my people and certain field-pieces there, I, with two or three horsemen, went to see what the chiefs wanted. They said, that, if I would assure them that they would not be punished for what had occurred, they would raise the siege, re-establish the bridges, restore the causeways, and serve Your Majesty as they had before. They besought me to have brought

there one of their people, a religious whom I had made a prisoner, and who was similar to a superior of their religion. He came, and spoke with them, and made an agreement between them and me; and, as it appeared, and according to what they had said, they immediately sent messengers to the captains and people who were in outside camps, telling them that the attack on the fort should cease, as well as all other hostilities. Thus we took our leave and I entered the fort to eat.

When I was about to begin, some one came hastily, to say that the Indians had regained the bridges which we had captured that day, and had killed some Spaniards. God only knows how much disturbance this caused me, for I was thinking that we had assured a passage for our retreat. I mounted my horse with all possible haste, and rode through the length of the street, with some other horsemen following me, and, without halting anywhere, I again dashed through the Indians, and recaptured the bridges, pursuing the enemy to the mainland. As the foot soldiers were very tired, and wounded, and dismayed, none of them followed me, and this left me in a very dangerous situation after I had passed the bridges. When I sought to return, I found them retaken, and more deeply dug out than when we had filled them up, and from one side to the other all the causeway was full of people, not only on land, but also in canoes on the water, who goaded us, and stoned us in such a manner, that, if God had not interposed to save us it would have been impossible to escape; indeed it was even already announced in the city that I was dead. When I reached the last bridge nearest the city, I found all the horsemen who had gone with me fallen in it, and one horse loose, so that I could not pass, but was obliged to return alone in face of my enemies. I forced something of a passage, so that the horses passed, and after this, I

Narrow Escape of Cortes

found the bridge free, though I crossed with much trouble, for I had to jump the horse from one side to the other, almost six feet, but, as I and he were armoured, they did us no serious hurt beyond slight body wounds. Thus victory was theirs that night, for they had captured the said four bridges.

Leaving a guard over the other four, I went to the fort, and had a wooden bridge constructed which forty men could carry, and, seeing our great danger, and the great damage we daily received from the Indians, and fearing also that they might destroy that causeway as they had the others, when we would all inevitably perish, and because many of my company entreated me many times to depart, and because all, or nearly all, were wounded so badly that they could no longer fight, I determined to leave that same night. I collected in a room all the gold and jewels belonging to Your Majesty that could be carried, and I delivered it in parcels to the officials of Your Highness, whom I designated in your royal name, beseeching and requiring the alcaldes, and municipal authorities, and all the people who were there, to help me take it away. I gave one of my mares for this purpose, on which they loaded as much as she could carry; and I designated certain Spaniards, not only from my servants, but also of the others, to accompany the said gold and mare, and the rest of the officials, alcaldes, municipal officers, and myself, gave and distributed the remainder to the Spaniards to carry away.

The Sorrowful Night

Having abandoned the fort, and much treasure, belonging not only to Your Highness, but also to the Spaniards and myself, I set forth as secretly as possible, taking with me a son and two daughters of Montezuma, Cacamazin, the lord of Aculuacan, and another of his brothers, whom I had put in his place, and some other chiefs of

of the provinces and cities whom I held as prisoners. When we reached the bridges which the Indians had removed we laid down the bridge which I carried with little trouble at the first crossing, for there was none to offer resistance save certain watchmen who shouted so loudly, that, before we came to the second, an infinite multitude of the enemy had risen against us, battling on every side both on water and land. I crossed rapidly with five horsemen and five hundred foot-soldiers, with whom I passed all the other broken bridges swimming until I reached the mainland. Leaving those people there, I returned to the others and found that they were fighting stoutly; but the injury our people received was beyond calculation, not only the Spaniards, but also the Tascaltecas who were with us, being nearly all killed. Though the Spaniards killed many natives, many of the Spaniards and horses were killed, likewise, and all the gold, and jewels, and many other things which we carried, and all the artillery, were lost.

When the survivors were collected, I pushed them on ahead, while I, with three or four horsemen and about twenty foot-soldiers who ventured to remain with me, took the rear-guard, fighting the Indians until we arrived at a city, called Tacuba, at the end of that causeway. God only knows how much trouble and danger I endured, because every time I faced about against our adversaries, I came back full of arrows, and darts, and stones, for as there was water on both sides, they could assail us with impunity and fearlessly. When we attacked those on land they would leap into the water, thus receiving very little hurt, except that some who in the skirmish interfered with each other and fell, were killed. With great trouble and fatigue, I conducted my remaining people to the city of Tacuba without being killed myself, nor having any Spaniard or Indian wounded, except one horseman who had gone with me to the rear. Those who

went in the vanguard did not have less fighting than those on the flanks, although the strongest force was the one at our backs where the people of the city pursued us.

When I reached the city of Tacuba, I found all the people in a panic in the square, not knowing where to go, so I made great haste to get them out into the country, before more of the inhabitants should gather in the said city and capture the roofs, from which they could do us great injury. The vanguard said they did not know the way, so I sent them to the rear, and took the lead myself until we had got clear of the city, where I awaited them at some farms. When the rear-guard came up, I learned that they had sustained some injury, and that some of the Spaniards and Indians had been killed, and that much gold had been lost and left on the road, where the Indians gathered it up. I held the Indians in check there until all the people had passed on, so that the foot-soldiers might take the hill, on which there stood a strong tower and buildings. These they captured without sustaining any injury, for I did not leave my place, nor allow the enemy to advance, until they had secured the hill. God only knows the trouble and fatigue we sustained, for no horse of the twenty-four was left which could still run, nor any horseman who could raise his arms, nor a sound foot-soldier who could move. When we reached the buildings, we fortified ourselves in them, and the enemy surrounded us and besieged us until night, not leaving us an hour's rest. We found that over one hundred and fifty Spaniards were killed in this fight, forty-five mares and horses, and more than two thousand of the Indians who had aided the Spaniards; amongst the latter, they killed the son and daughters of Montezuma, and all the other chiefs whom we carried prisoners.

At midnight, believing we were not observed, we left the said lodgings very silently, leaving many fires burning in it, not knowing any road, nor where we were going,

except that an Indian of Tascaltecal told us he would guide us to his country if they did not stop us on the way. There were some watchmen very near who heard us, and alarmed many towns round about, from which numbers of people gathered and pursued us until daybreak. At that time five horsemen who rode ahead as scouts met some bands of people along the road, and killed some of them; these were routed under the belief that more horsemen and foot-soldiers were coming up. When I saw that our enemies were gathering from all sides, I got into order our people who were still fit for service, making squadrons, and placing them in the vanguard, rear-guard, and on the flanks, with the wounded in the centre, and I likewise distributed the horsemen. Thus we continued all that day, fighting on all sides, so that during the whole night and day we did not advance more than three leagues. When night came on Our Lord was pleased to show us a tower and good lodging place on a hill, where we again fortified ourselves, and during that night they left us in peace, although at dawn we had some disturbance from a false alarm caused by our own fears of the multitude which kept coming in pursuit of us.

The next morning, one hour after daybreak, I departed in the order already mentioned, taking my vanguard and rear-guard in good order; and on all sides we were followed by the enemy, yelling, and raising the whole country, which is thickly populated. The horsemen, although we were few attacked them, but did little harm amongst them, because, the ground being rough, they would retreat to the hills. In this manner, we marched that day along some lakes,[1] till we reached a populous town, where we thought to have some skirmish with the townspeople. When we arrived there, they abandoned it, and went to some other towns thereaboüts in the neighbourhood. I rested there that day and the next, not only

[1] The lakes of Zumpango, Xaltocan, and San Cristobal.

because both the wounded and the sound ones of my people were very weary and exhausted with hunger and thirst, and the horses likewise were well tired out, but also because we found there some maize which we ate and carried away with us on the road, boiled and roasted. We left the next day, always pursued by our adversaries, who attacked us on the vanguard and rear-guard with many yells. We continued our march, guided by the Indian of Tascaltecal, during which we suffered much trouble and fatigue, for many times we lost our way. When it was already late, we reached a plain, where there were some small houses in which we lodged that night, suffering great want of food.

Early next morning we began our march, and, before we reached the road, our enemies still followed our rear-guard. Constantly skirmishing with them, we arrived at a large town, two leagues distant, where there were some Indians stationed on the top of a small hill to the right. Believing that we might capture them, as they were near the road, and also discover if there were just behind the hill, any more than those who were visible, I started round the said hill with five horsemen and twelve foot-soldiers, and behind it there was a great city[1] of many people with whom we engaged fiercely. On account of the rocky country, and the great number of their people, and our small numbers, we had to retire to the town where our people were. I came out of this, very badly

[1] Otumba. Prescott observes that even Bernal Diaz, who was somewhat sceptical on other occasions, admits the apparition of St. James mounted on a white charger at Otumba. Voltaire comments as follows: "*Ceux qui ont fait des revelations de ces étranges evenemens les ont voulu relever par des miracles qui ne servent en effet qu'a les rabaisser. Le vrai miracle fût la conduite de Cortez.*" Possibly, but it is by the faith which we were promised should move mountains that such heroic deeds are accomplished, and the material apparition required to satisfy a Voltaire would be but a poor thing compared to the reality of the Spanish conqueror's faith in the presence and guidance of his patron saints. As well doubt the *Pucelle's* belief in her "Voices."

wounded in the head by two sling stones, and after binding up the wounds I made the Spaniards leave the town, because it did not seem to me a safe camp for us; and we marched thus with great numbers of Indians pursuing us, fighting so stoutly that they wounded four or five Spaniards and as many horses. They killed us a horse, also, and God only knows how great was its value to us, and what pain we suffered at its death, because, after God, our only security was the horses; but we consoled ourselves with its meat, and ate it without leaving even the skin, so great was our want; for, since leaving the capital, we had nothing to eat but roasted and boiled corn, and not always enough of that, and, in addition, some herbs which we gathered in the country.

Seeing that the enemy increased every day, and grew stronger, and that we were becoming weaker, that night I ordered the wounded and sick, whom we carried behind us on our horses, to provide themselves with crutches and other contrivances for supporting themselves, so that the horses and sound Spaniards would be free to fight. From what happened to us the next day, it seemed that the Holy Ghost had inspired me with this thought, for, after we had left this camp in the morning, and marched about a league and a half, so great a multitude of Indians came out to encounter me, that all about us we could not see the ground, so completely was it covered by them. They attacked us on all sides so violently that we could not distinguish each other, for being so pressed and entangled with them. Certainly we believed that to be our last day, so great was the force of the Indians and so feeble the resistance they encountered in us; for we were already exhausted, and almost all of us wounded and fainting from hunger. But Our Lord was pleased to show His great power and mercy to us, for, with all our weakness, we broke their great pride and haughtiness,

The Battle of Otumba

in that many of their prominent and important persons perished, for they were so many that they hindered one another, and were unable either to fight or to fly. We spent a great part of the day in this struggle, until it pleased God that one of those persons, who must have been an important chief, fell, for with his death all the battle ceased. After this, we continued our way more easily, although some of them still harassed us until we reached a small house in the plain, where we lodged that night and on the open ground. From there we first descried certain mountains of the province of Tascaltecal, at which not a little joy filled our hearts, because we recognised the country, and knew our way, although we were not quite positive of finding the natives faithful and friendly; for we feared that, seeing us so reduced, they might wish to put an end to our lives, in order to recover the liberty which they had formerly enjoyed. This thought and suspicion cast us into an affliction which equalled that which we felt whilst fighting with the Culuans.

The next morning at daybreak, we began to march by a very level road which led directly to the said province of Tascaltecal upon which only a few of our adversaries followed, although very near were many large towns; from some hills in our rear, though, from a distance, they still continued yelling at us. On this day, which was Sunday, July 8th, we left all the country of Culua, and entered the province of Tascaltecal, at a village of some three or four thousand households, called Gualipan,[1] where the natives received us very well, and somewhat relieved our great hunger and weariness, although for much of the provision which they gave us they asked payment, and would only accept gold. This we were obliged in our great necessity to give.

We remained three days in this town, and Magiscatzin,

[1] Hueyothlipan.

and Sicutengal, and all the chiefs of the said province and some of those of Quasucingo, came to see and speak to me, showing much grief for what had happened to us, and endeavouring to console me, reminding me that they had often told me that the Culuans were traitors against whom I should be on my guard, but that I would not believe it. Inasmuch as I had escaped alive, they said I ought to rejoice, for they would aid me until death to obtain satisfaction for the injury the Culuans had done me. They added that they felt obliged to do this as vassals of Your Highness, besides which they also suffered because of the many sons and brothers who had perished in my company, and on account of other injuries which in past times they had received, so I might be sure they would be my true and steadfast friends until death. As I now came wounded and almost all of my company exhausted, they wanted us to go into the city, four leagues from this town, where we might rest, and they would care for us and restore us. I was very grateful to them, and accepted their invitation, and gave them some few things from the valuables which had escaped, at which they were well contented; and I went with them to the said city, where I likewise had a good reception. Magiscatzin brought me a bedstead of finely finished wood, with some bed-clothing, such as they used, for me to sleep in, for we brought none; and he helped everybody with all that he had and could.

When I quit this city for Temixtitan, I had left here certain sick persons and some of my servants with silver and wearing apparel belonging to me, and certain other household things and provisions, in order to march forward unencumbered lest anything should happen to us, and all the documents and agreements which I had made with the natives of these parts should be lost. All the clothing of the Spaniards who came with me had likewise been left, as they only took away what they wore,

and their bedding. I learned that another servant of mine had come from Vera Cruz, bringing provisions and things for me. He had been accompanied by horsemen and forty-five foot-soldiers, and had likewise taken with him the others whom I had left there. He carried all the silver and clothing, my own as well as that of my companions, with seven thousand dollars of melted gold, which I had left there in two chests, without counting other valuables, and other fourteen thousand dollars of gold in pieces, which had been given, in the province of Tuchitepeque, to that captain whom I had sent to build the town of Quacucalco. He carried also many other things which were worth more than thirty thousand dollars of gold. This I learned, and also that the Indians of Culua had killed them all on the road, and taken their treasure. I likewise learned that they had killed, on the roads, many other Spaniards who were coming to the city of Temixtitan, believing that I was there at peace, and that the roads were as secure as I had before held them. I assure Your Majesty that all of us were plunged into such sadness by this news that it could hardly have been worse, because the loss of these Spaniards and the treasure recalled the deaths and losses of the Spaniards who had been killed in the city, at the bridges, and on the road; and especially as it roused much suspicion in me that, in like manner, the people of Vera Cruz might have been attacked, and that those whom we considered our friends might have rebelled, upon hearing of our defeat. To learn the truth, I immediately dispatched messengers accompanied by Indians to guide them, whom I ordered to avoid the high road until they arrived at Vera Cruz, and to let me know promptly what had happened there. It pleased Our Lord that they should find the Spaniards very well, and the natives perfectly faithful. It was a great relief to learn this after our losses and griefs, though it was very bad news for them to hear of our disaster and rout.

I remained twenty days in this province of Tascaltecal, healing my wounds which with the poor care on the road had become much worse, especially the wound on my head; and I also had all the wounded of my company cared for. Some of them died, not only from their wounds, but also on account of our past troubles; others remained maimed in their arms, and others lame in their legs, for their wounds were very bad, and for curing them there was very little means. I myself lost two fingers of my left hand.

Events in Tlascala

Seeing that many of ours were dead, and that those who survived were wounded, and disheartened by the dangers and troubles through which they had passed, and fearing others still ahead, my men entreated me many times to go to Vera Cruz; for there we could fortify ourselves before those natives, whom we still considered our friends, seeing our rout and diminished numbers, could join with our enemies, and, taking the passes over which we had to cross, attack us on the one side, and our people at Vera Cruz on the other. Being there together, and having ships we would be stronger and better able to defend ourselves, in case they should attack before we summoned aid from the Islands. I, however, remembered that Fortune is always on the side of the daring, and that we were Christians, confiding in the very great mercy of God, who would never permit us to perish; and I considered that to show so little courage before the natives, especially our friends, might cause them to abandon us the sooner, and turn against us; that this great and noble country, at peace and on the point of being secured under Your Majesty, would be lost. The war must be continued, to bring about the pacification of this country as it was before, and I determined on no account to go to the sea-port, but rather, disregarding all difficulty and danger which might offer, I said that I would not abandon

this country; for besides its being disgraceful to me and very dangerous to all, we would act treasonably towards Your Majesty, and I was determined to return against the enemy from all possible points, and to take the offensive against them in every way I could.

After stopping twenty days in this province, although I was not yet well of my wounds, and those of my company were still somewhat weak, I left for another, called Tepeaca, which belonged to the league and confederation of Culua, our enemy. I had been informed that the inhabitants there had killed ten or twelve Spaniards who were on their way by the road which passes there, from Vera Cruz to the capital. The said province of Tepeaca borders with those of Tascaltecal and Churultecal, for it is very large. As we were entering that province, many natives came out to attack us, defending the road, as best they could, by fortifying themselves in strong and dangerous positions. To avoid prolixity, I do not give an account of all the particulars of this war; I will only say that, after the requirements had been made on the part of Your Majesty, that they should make peace, and they had refused to submit, we fought with them several times; and, with the help of God, and the royal good fortune of Your Highness, we always scattered them, and killed many, without their killing one of us in the whole course of the said war, or wounding one solitary Spaniard. Although, as I have said, this province is very large, I pacified many cities and provinces subject to it in about twenty days, and the lords and chiefs of it came and offered themselves as vassals to Your Majesty. Moreover I expelled many Culuans, who had come to this province to help the natives in making war upon us, and to hinder them by fair means or foul from becoming our friends. Thus I had to busy myself up till now in this matter which is not yet alto-

Expedition to Tepeaca

gether finished, for there are still some cities and towns to be pacified, which by the help of Our Lord will shortly be, like these others, subject to the royal dominion of Your Majesty.

In a certain part of this province, where they killed those ten Spaniards, the natives were always very active in the war, and very rebellious, and had to be reduced by force of arms. I made a number slaves, of whom I gave a fifth part to the officials of Your Majesty. I did this especially as, in addition to their having killed the said Spaniards, and rebelled against the service of Your Highness, they eat human flesh, a fact so notorious that I do not send proofs of it to Your Majesty. I was also moved to make the said slaves in order to strike terror into the Culuans, and also because there are many who will never mend themselves until great and severe punishment is inflicted upon them. We entered upon this war with the aid of the natives of Tascaltecal, and Churultecal, and Quasucingo, by which our friendship has been well confirmed; and we are convinced that they will always serve Your Highness as loyal vassals.

While conducting this war in the province of Tepeaca, I received letters from Vera Cruz, telling me that two ships had arrived in that port, belonging to Francisco de Garay who it appears had again sent more people to that great river which I described to Your Highness, and that the natives there had fought with them, killing seventeen or eighteen Christians, and wounding many others. They had likewise killed seven horses, and the remaining Spaniards who returned to the ships had escaped by their good legs. The captains and all of them had arrived very much shattered and wounded, and my lieutenant had received them very kindly and taken care of them. That they might convalesce the better, he had sent some of the said Spaniards to the country of a friendly chief near there, where they were well attended to and provided

for. All this grieved us as much as our own past troubles, but perchance this rout would not have happened to them if they had united with me at first, as I have already recounted to Your Highness; for I was then well informed about everything in these parts, and they would have had such advice from me that what had happened could not have occurred, especially as the lord of that river and country, called Panuco, had given himself as a vassal to Your Majesty. In recognition of his allegiance he had sent me certain gifts by his messenger to the city of Temixtitan, as I have already stated. I have written to Vera Cruz, that if the captain of Francisco de Garay desires to leave, to lend him assistance, and help him to dispatch his ships.

Founding of Segura de la Frontera

After having pacified and subjugated to the royal service of Your Highness all of this province which has been pacified, Your Majesty's officials and I conferred many times respecting the measures to be taken for its security. Seeing that the natives had first given themselves as vassals of Your Highness, and then rebelled and killed the Spaniards, and that they were on the road and pass where the traffic of all the sea-ports had to pass towards the interior, we considered that, if it were left to itself as before, the natives of this country, and also of Culua who were very near, would again try to seduce them into rebellion, from which would follow much harm and impediment to the pacification of these parts, and to the service of Your Highness; and the said traffic would cease, especially as on the road to the coast there are two very steep and rough passes, which confine with the said province, where the natives could defend themselves with little difficulty. For this, as well as for other reasons and weighty causes, it seemed to us that, to prevent the aforesaid evils, a town should be founded in the best part of the said province of Tepeaca, where the necessary con-

ditions could be found for the colonists. And for the purpose of carrying this out, I, in the name of Your Majesty, gave the said town the name of Segura de la Frontera,[1] and I named alcaldes and municipal and other officers as is customary; and, for the better security of the householders of this town, materials are being brought to build a fort on the place I designated; as materials hereabouts are of good quality, all possible haste shall be employed.

While writing this account, messengers came to me from the chief of the city, called Guacachula,[2] about five leagues from this province, and situated at the entrance of a pass leading to the province of Mexico. They told me, on behalf of the said chief, that several days before they had intended to come to me to tender the obedience they owed to Your Majesty, as your vassals, and I must not consider them culpable, believing their failure to do so was voluntary. They told me that some captains of Culua were lodged in their city, and that in it and about a league distant were thirty thousand men in garrison, guarding that pass, to prevent our crossing it, and also to prevent the natives of their city and other neighbouring provinces from serving Your Majesty, and becoming our friends; and they said they would have come to offer themselves to Your Royal service, had those men not prevented them. They let me know this that I might remedy it, because, besides the obstruction it was to those who were well disposed, the people of the city and neighbourhood suffered much injury, as they were taxed and ill-treated by the many armed warriors who took their women and chattels. If I would help them, they said they would obey any orders I gave them.

[1] The city was founded early in September, 1520, on the hillside, in a position both strategically and commercially advantageous; fortifications were built and strict laws against gambling, blaspheming, etc., were enacted. The present town is called Tepeaca, and stands on the plain.

[2] Huaquechula: another republic: also spelled Guaquechula.

After thanking them for their information and offer, I immediately gave them thirteen horsemen, two hundred foot-soldiers, and some thirty thousand Indian allies, to accompany them.[1] It was agreed that they should lead them by roads where they would not be seen, and, when they approached near the city, its chiefs, and inhabitants, and other vassals and confederates, should be notified, and should surround the quarters where the captains were, to capture and kill them before their men could help them, so that, when the latter did appear, the Spaniards would already be in the city waiting to fight and rout them. They and the Spaniards marched by the city of Churultecal and through some parts of the province of Quasucingo, which borders on the territory of Guacachula within four leagues of it; and, in a town of the said province of Quasucingo, it is said that they told the Spaniards that the natives of that province were leagued with the Guacachulans and Culuans to entice the Spaniards with this project to the said city, where they could kill them. As the fright, with which the Culuans in their city and country had inspired them, had not yet altogether abated, this information alarmed the Spaniards; and the captain whom I had sent with them made an investigation, and took prisoner all those chiefs of Quasucingo who were with them, and the messengers from the city of Guacachula, and returned with them to the city of Churultecal, four leagues from there. Thence, together with the proofs he had obtained, he sent to me all the prisoners, attended by horsemen and foot-soldiers. The captain also wrote me that our people were frightened because the enterprise seemed very difficult. On the arrival of the prisoners I spoke to them by my interpreter, and, having used all diligence to learn the truth, it appeared that the captain had misjudged them so I im-

[1] Diego de Ordaz and Alonso de Avila were in charge of this expedition which took the road by Cholula.

mediately set them free and satisfied them, protesting that I believed them loyal vassals of Your Sacred Majesty, and that I would go myself to destroy the Culuans. To avoid showing any timidity or hesitancy to the natives, both friends and enemies, it seemed that I ought not to abandon the proposed expedition. To relieve the fears of some of the Spaniards, I determined to suspend other business, and the dispatch for Your Majesty which I was writing, and thus I set out that same hour with all possible haste, arriving the same day at the city of Churultecal (which is eight leagues from this city) where I found the Spaniards, who still affirmed their conviction of the treachery.

The next day, I slept in the town of Quasucingo, where the chiefs had been arrested. Having agreed with the messengers of Guacachula as to where and how we should enter their city, I started the next day, one hour before daybreak, arriving near it about ten o'clock in the morning. About half a league distant from it, certain messengers of the city met me on the road to tell me that everything was well planned and ready, and that the Culuans knew nothing of our coming, because the natives of the said city had captured certain of their spies, who were on the road, and also some others whom the Culuan captains had stationed on the walls and towers of the city to overlook the country. All our adversaries were thus off their guard, believing they were protected by their watchmen and spies; hence I might advance undiscovered. I therefore made haste to reach the city unseen, for we were marching over a plain where we might easily be observed.

Capture of Guacachula

It appeared that as soon as the townspeople perceived us, and saw how near we were, they immediately surrounded the quarters of the captains, and began to attack the others scattered throughout the city. When

I arrived within a bow shot of the city, as many as forty prisoners were brought to me, and I made the more haste to enter. There was a great uproar in all the streets of the city. Fighting with the adversaries, and guided by the inhabitants, I reached the captains' quarters which I found surrounded by more than three thousand men striving to enter the gate. They had taken possession of the upper stories and terraces, but the captains fought so well and so steadily that they could not force an entrance; although the Culuans were few, they fought like valiant men, and besides the building was strong. When I arrived, we entered with so many natives that it was impossible to prevent the defenders being killed forthwith; for I wished to take some alive, in order to get information about matters in the capital, and to learn who was sovereign after the death of Montezuma, and about other things. I could only rescue one more dead than alive, who informed me as I shall relate hereafter. They killed many who were quartered in the city, and the survivors, learning of my coming, began to fly towards the garrison, but many of them were likewise killed in the pursuit. This tumult was so quickly heard and understood by the men of the garrison, who were on a certain elevation, commanding the city and the surrounding plain, that those who were escaping from the city encountered the others who were coming to its relief to see what had happened. The latter were altogether more than thirty thousand men, and the most brilliant troops we had yet seen, for they wore many ornaments of gold, and silver, and feathers, and, as the city was large, they began to set fire to it in the quarter where they entered. This became quickly known to the inhabitants, and I sallied forth with only horsemen, for the foot-soldiers were already very tired. We broke through the enemy, who retreated to a position which we took from them, following them up and overtaking many

of them on a very rough slope, so that when we gained the top neither the enemy nor ourselves were able to advance or retreat. Many fell dead, without a wound, stifled by the heat, and two horses were exhausted, one of which died. We did much damage, for many of our Indian allies came up, and, as they arrived fresh and the adversaries were almost dead, they killed many, so that in a very short time the field was cleared of the living, and covered with the dead. We reached the barracks and huts which they had recently made in the field, and which were in three divisions each of which appeared like a good-sized village. In addition to their warriors, they had a great display of servants, and provisions, and camp supplies, there having been, as I learned afterwards, some notable persons in it. All was despoiled and burned by our Indian friends, who, I assure Your Majesty, had gathered to the number of one hundred thousand men. Having by this victory expelled all the enemy from the country, and driven them beyond some bridges and narrow passes, we returned to the city, where we were well received, and quartered by the inhabitants; and we rested in that city three days, being in great need of repose.

At this time, the natives of a large city, called Ocupatuyo (which is on the top of these sierras, two leagues from the enemy's camp, and also at the foot of the mountain chain, where I said the smoke comes out), came to offer themselves to the service of Your Majesty. They said that their chief had gone away with the Culuans when we pursued them, believing that we would not stop before reaching his city, but that they had desired my friendship for many days, wishing to come and offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty, although their chief would not allow it nor consent to it, in spite of their having entreated his permission. They said that now they wished to serve Your Highness, and that the brother

of the said chief, who had shared their opinion and intentions was likewise still of the same mind. They prayed me that I would approve his succession to the lordship, and that although the other might return, I would not consent to his being received as their chief; if so neither would they receive him. I told them that, as they had been of the league and confederation of Culua, and had rebelled against the service of Your Majesty, they deserved severe punishment, and that I had thought to execute it upon their persons and property; but, inasmuch as they had come, saying their chief was the cause of their rebellion and uprising, I, in the name of Your Majesty, pardoned their past error, and received and admitted them to Your Royal service. I warned them that if they committed a similar error again they would be punished and chastised, but if they proved loyal vassals of Your Royal Highness, I would favour and help them in Your Royal name; and they promised to do this.

Fortifications of Guacachula

This city of Guacachula is situated in a plain, bounded on one side by very high and rugged hills, and on the other by two rivers about two bow shots apart, each of which flows through very deep and large ravines. There are, consequently, very few entrances to the city, and those which exist are so rough to ascend and descend, that it can hardly be accomplished on horseback. The entire city is surrounded by a very strong wall of stone and mortar, the outside being about twenty feet high, while from the inside it is about on the same level with the ground. There is a battlement along the wall three feet high, to protect them in fighting, and they have four entrances, broad enough for a man to enter on horseback. At each of these entrances, there are three or four curves in the wall, doubling one over the other, and above these turnings there is also a battlement on the walls, from

which they can fight. They keep a great quantity of all sorts of large and small stones all along this wall which they use in fighting. This city may have some five or six thousand households, and in the surrounding hamlets subject to them as many others or more. It is very extensive, and within the city are many gardens of fruits and aromatic herbs, as is their custom.

After resting three days in this said city, we went to another, called Izzucan, four leagues distant from Guacachula, because I was informed that there were many Culuans in garrison there also, and that the people of the said city, and of other towns and places dependent on them, were, and showed themselves to be, very partial to the Culuans because their chief was a blood relation of Montezuma. So many of the natives, vassals of Your Majesty, accompanied me that they almost covered the country and the mountains as far as we could see, and in truth there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand men; and we arrived at the said town of Izzunca at ten o'clock, finding it deserted by women and young people, but there were about five or six thousand well-armed warriors in it. When the Spaniards appeared before it, they attempted some defence of their city, but they shortly abandoned it, because from the side to which we were guided for entering we found a practical entrance. We pursued them through the city, forcing them to jump over the crenellated top of the wall into a river which surrounds it on the other side, whose bridges being destroyed we were somewhat delayed in crossing it; and we followed in pursuit of them about a league and a half, in which distance I believe few escaped. Returning to the city, I sent two of its natives who had been taken prisoner to speak to the principal persons of the city, for the chief of it had also gone with the Culuans of the garrison, so as to induce them to return to their city; and I promised them in the name of Your Majesty that,

being loyal vassals of Your Highness from henceforth, they would be well treated by me, and their rebellion and past error forgiven. These natives left, and three days later some of the principal persons came and asked pardon for their error, saying that they could not have acted otherwise, because they had done what their chief commanded them, but that they promised from henceforth, inasmuch as their chief had gone and left them, to serve Your Majesty well and loyally. I reassured them, telling them to return to their homes, and to bring back their wives and children who were in other places and towns of their allies; and I told them likewise to tell the inhabitants of those towns to come to me and I would pardon them the past, for they would not like that I should be obliged to come to them, as then they would sustain much damage, which would greatly grieve me. Thus it was done, and within two days that city of Izzucan was again populated; and its dependencies came to offer themselves as vassals of Your Highness, and all that province remained very secure, and, with those of Guacachula, our friends and allies.

Disputed Succession at Izzucan

A certain difference arose as to whom the province of this city of Izzucan belonged in the absence of the chief who had gone to Mexico. The former rightful chief of this province had been put to death by Montezuma, who, in his place put the present ruler, whom he had married to one of his own nieces; and a dispute had arisen as to the right of succession between a bastard son of the murdered chief and the son of his legitimate daughter, who had married the chief of Guacachula. It was agreed amongst them, that the lordship should be inherited by that son of the chief of Guacachula who descended by the legitimate line from the old chief, for, although the other was a son, he could not inherit

my presence they gave obedience to that boy, who was about ten years old; and, not being of an age to govern them, they decided that the bastard uncle should act with three other chiefs, one of Guacachula, and two of Izzucan, who should be governors of the country and should have control of the boy until he should be of an age to rule.

This city of Izzucan may have some three or four thousand households, and its streets and markets are well laid out. It has one hundred mosques and strong oratories with their towers, all of which we burnt. It stands on a plain at the foot of a medium-sized hill, where they have a very good fort, and, on the other side towards the plain, it is surrounded by a deep river which flows near the wall, which is thus surrounded by the deep ravine of the river. Over the ravine they have made a battlement, about six feet in height, which extends all round the city, and all along the wall they had placed many stones. The valley is circular, and very fertile in fruits and cotton, which latter is not produced on the heights because of the cold, and it belongs to *tierra caliente* because it is well protected by the mountain ranges. The whole valley is irrigated by well constructed aqueducts.

I remained in this city until I could leave it well peopled and pacified. There likewise came to it, to offer themsevles as vassals of Your Majesty the chief of the city called Guajocingo, and the lord of another city, ten leagues distant from that of Izzucan, on the frontier of Mexico. There came also people from eight of the towns of the province of Coastoaca.[1] This is one of those mentioned in previous chapters, where the Spaniards, whom I had sent to seek gold in the provinces of Zuzula[2] and Tamazula[3] (for they joined each other) had said that there because he was a bastard. Thus it was settled, and in

[1] Oaxaca. [2] Zozolla. [3] Tamazollan.

were very great towns and houses, well built of the best masonry, such as we had not seen in any of these parts. This province of Coastoaca is forty leagues from that of Izzucan. The natives of the said eight towns offered themselves as vassals of Your Highness, and said that four others in the same province would come very soon. They asked me to excuse them if they had not dared to do so before for fear of the Culuans, but said that they never had taken up arms against me, nor had they participated in the killing of any Spaniards, and that always since offering themselves to the service of Your Highness they had been good and loyal subjects in their hearts, but had not dared to manifest it out of fear of the Culuans. Thus Your Highness may be very sure that, Our Lord favouring Your Royal good fortune, we shall within a short time regain what was lost, or the greater part of it; because every day many provinces and cities, who before were subject to Montezuma, come to offer themselves as vassals of Your Majesty; for they see that those who do so are well received and treated by me, and that those who do otherwise are destroyed one after another.

Montezuma's Successor

From prisoners taken in the city of Guacachula, especially from that wounded man, I learned very fully about the affairs of the capital of Temixtitan, and how, after the death of Montezuma, a brother of his, lord of the city of Iztapalapa, called Cuetravacin,[1] had succeeded to the lordship, because the son of Montezuma, who should

[1] After the death of Montezuma, Cuitlahuaczin of Iztapalapan, who had been in chief command of the rising against the Spaniards, assumed the chieftainship and three months later (Aztec calendar) he was appointed emperor. He married Montezuma's daughter, the Princess Tecuichpo. His coronation was celebrated with the customary solemnities, the prisoners taken on the *Sorrowful Night*, both Spaniards and Tlascalans, serving as victims for the sacrifices. The newly elected sovereign had to cope with a situation bristling with difficulties—dissensions within, insubordination in the tributary provinces, the enemy without, and finally and most terrible of all, the

have inherited the sovereignty was killed at the bridges and of his two other living sons one is said to be mad, and the other palsied. They said that for these reasons and because he had made war against us, the brother had inherited, and was regarded as a very valiant and prudent man. I likewise learned how they were fortifying, not only the city, but other places in the dominion, and how they were preparing walls, barricades, trenches, and all kinds of arms; and I learned especially that they were making long lances, like pikes, for the horses, and we have even seen some of these with which they were fighting in the province of Tepeaca, and in the hamlets and buildings where the Culuans were quartered at Guacachula, we likewise found many of them. I learned many other things which I omit in order not to weary Your Highness.

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small-pox, which raged throughout the country. To this dread pest, called by the Aztecs, *Teozahuatl*—Cuitlahuac fell a victim, and after a brief reign of eighty days, died on Nov. 25, 1520. During this period he had exerted every effort to unite all the forces of Mexico against the common enemy, sending embassies to friends and foes alike, urging that old differences be buried for the moment, and that all should make common cause to expel or destroy the strangers. He found a supporter in Xicotencatl, who, like himself had never believed in the semi-divine character of the *teules*, or gods as the Spaniards were commonly termed, but had from the first distrusted them, and counselled their destruction. Maxixcatzin withstood Xicotencatl in the Tlascalan Senate when the embassy from Mexico appeared proposing an alliance; in the acrimonious dispute which ensued, the old Senator struck the young General, and knocked him down the steps of the rostrum. Maxixcatzin prevailed over the divided opinions, and the ambassadors withdrew hurriedly to report their failure to their sovereign. Cortes was informed of these negotiations, and visited Maxixcatzin to thank him for holding the Republic to the Spanish Alliance. As will be seen in a note to the Third Letter, Xicotencatl's sentiments towards the Spaniards never changed. His foresight was keener than that of his countrymen, and he discerned that the white men were far more formidable enemies than the Mexicans, but the lust for present revenge prevailed over considerations of future independence. Xicotencatl was unsupported, and, in the end, he paid with his life the price of his invincible aversion.

I sent four ships to the island of Hispaniola, that they might return quickly with horses and people for our assistance; and I likewise sent to buy four others, so that they might bring from the island of Hispaniola, and the city of San Domingo, horses and horsemen, bows, and powder, because this is what we most need in these parts. Foot soldiers armed with shields are of little service, on account of the great number of people, and their having so great and such strong cities and forts. I therefore wrote to the licentiate Rodrigo de Figueroa, and to Your Highness's officials in the said island, asking them to favour and assist me as much as possible, as it was of such importance to Your Highness's services, and the security of our lives, since, on the arrival of this help, I intended to return against the capital and its country; and I believe, as I have already told Your Majesty, that it will again in a short time return to the condition in which I had it before, and that the past losses will be made good. Meanwhile, I am engaged in building twelve brigantines to launch on the lake, and already they are making the decking and other parts of them, because they have to be carried overland, so that on their arrival they may be joined and completed in a short time. Nails are also being made for them, and the pitch, sails, tow, oars, and other things, which are necessary are being got ready. I assure Your Majesty that, until I achieve this end, I shall take no rest, nor shall I cease to strive in every possible way and manner for it, disregarding all the danger, and trouble, and cost, which may come upon me.

Two or three days ago, I learnt by a letter from my lieutenant at Vera Cruz, that a small caravel had arrived in that port with about thirty seamen and landsmen, who said they were seeking the people whom Francisco de Garay had sent to this country. Of these latter I have written to Your Majesty that they arrived in such

want of provisions that, if they had not found succour there, they would have died from hunger and thirst. I learned from them how they had reached the river Panuco, remaining anchored there thirty days without seeing any people along all the river or in the country, from which it is believed that that country has been deserted on account of what had happened there. The people of the said caravel likewise said that two or three other ships of the said Francisco de Garay would follow immediately behind them with people and horses, and that they believed they had already passed down the coast. It seemed to me, then, that it was not in compliance with Your Highness's service that these ships and people should be lost through going in ignorance of the affairs of the country, as the natives might do them more harm than they had the first ones. The said caravel should be sent to seek those two ships, in order to notify them of what had happened, and to bring them to the port of the said city, where the captain sent by Francisco de Garay was waiting for them. And God grant that he finds them in time before they go ashore, because, as the natives were already on the look-out, and the Spaniards were ignorant, I fear they may sustain much harm, and that it would not serve God Our Lord and Your Highness, for it would enrage those dogs [the Indians] all the more, and inspire them with more courage and daring against those who might come hereafter.

I said in one of the preceding chapters, that I had learned that, after the death of Montezuma, his brother, called Cuetravacin, who had been raised as lord, was preparing many kinds of arms, and fortifying himself in the capital, and in other cities near the lake. And a short time since, I have likewise learned that the said Cuetravacin has sent his messengers to all the countries, provinces, cities, subject to the said sovereignty, to promise

Montezuma's Successor

his vassals that he has graciously remitted during one year all tributes and taxes which they are obliged to pay him, on condition that they would use every means to make a very cruel war on all Christians, either killing them or expelling them from the country; and that they were to do in like manner to all natives who were our friends or allies. Although I have trust in Our Lord that they will not be able to carry out their intention, I am in extreme need of help and aid, because the Indians, our friends, come daily from many cities, towns, and hamlets, to ask for help against their enemies and ours, the Culuans, who make war on them because they hold to our friendship and alliance, and I am not able to help everywhere as I would wish. But, as I say, may it please Our Lord to augment our few forces, and to send, not only His own help, but also that which I have sent to ask from Hispaniola.

From what I have seen and understood concerning the similarity between this country and Spain, in its fertility, its size, its climate, and in many other features of it, it seemed to me the most suitable name for this country would be New Spain of the Ocean Sea, and thus in the name of Your Majesty I have christened it. I humbly supplicate Your Highness to approve of this and order that it be so called.

I have written to Your Majesty, although badly expressed, the truth of all that has happened in these parts and whatever it was most necessary Your Highness should know, and, by my other letter which goes with this present, I send to supplicate Your Royal Excellency to send a trustworthy person to make an enquiry and investigation of everything, for the purpose of informing Your Sacred Majesty of all. In this dispatch I also again very humbly supplicate the same, for I shall consider it a very particular favour, as giving entire credit to what I write.

Very High and Most Excellent Prince, may God, Our Lord, preserve the life and the very royal person and the very powerful state of Your Sacred Majesty, and augment it for long time with increase of many greater kingdoms and dominions, according as your royal heart may desire. From the town of Segura de la Frontera, of this New Spain, on the 30th October, 1520. Your Sacred Majesty's very humble servant and vassal, who kisses the very royal feet and hands of Your Highness.

FERNAN CORTES.

NOTE.[1]—After this, the news arrived on the first of the month of March past from the said New Spain, of how the Spaniards had taken by force the great city of Temixtitan, in which more Indians had perished than did Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem when it was taken by Vespasian, and in it there was likewise a greater number of people than in the said Holy City. They found little treasure because the natives had thrown and submerged it in the waters; they took only two hundred thousand dollars, and the Spaniards remained well fortified in the said city, which at present has about fifteen hundred foot soldiers, and five hundred horsemen, and they have more than one hundred thousand friendly natives in their camp. These are great and strange things, and it is without doubt another world, and the sole desire to see it causes envy to us who are outside its borders. The news which we hold to be worthy of belief is up to the beginning of April, 1522. This present letter of relation was printed in the very noble and very loyal city of Seville by Jacob Cromberger, a German, on the 8th of November, 1522.

[1] This postscriptum was obviously not written by Cortes, but by some one who read his letter; it was added before the receipt of his third letter, and was printed with the first edition in 1522.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

MARINA

With these few casual words, Cortes refers to the existence of one of the chief characters in the splendid drama of the conquest —his Indian mistress Marina, without whose aid the success of the Spaniards is hardly thinkable. He mentions her once again in his Fifth Letter, but she appears in his narrative only under the vague figure of "the interpreter whom I had with me."

There are almost as many different accounts of Marina's birth and childhood as there were writers to compose them, but all agree that she was of noble lineage, which Herrera says was evident from her superior bearing and manners.

Señor Garcia Icazbalceta in Note 37 to the second of the *Dialogos de Cervantes*, gives us a critical study of Marina. The conclusions of this learned writer admit the version given by Bernal Diaz, in spite of the fact that this contradicts those of his contemporaries, Las Casas and Gomara, the latter of whom must have had his information from his patron Cortes, himself. Clavigero adopted Bernal Diaz as his authority, as did also Solis. Prescott noticed the differences among the early writers, but refrained from pronouncing in favour of any one of them. All these authorities, however, were anterior to Garcia Icazbalceta. It would be impossible for any student of history to-day to neglect his valuable work in Mexican archives, or to ignore his conclusions, which may be safely followed and especially in this instance, in which they are sustained on the narrative of Bernal Diaz. Orozco y Berra has also eliminated some of the conflicting statements concerning Marina by an ingenious dissertation on the habitual confusion of the spelling of Mexican names by the Spaniards, and particularly by those writers who, never having been in Mexico, were passably ignorant of Indian nomenclature and Mexican geography, and took their information second-hand, often from illiterate or inaccurate persons.

Marina was the daughter of the lord of Painalla, in the province of Coatzocoalco. Her mother married a second time, and, upon the birth of a son, she agreed with her husband to dispose of her daughter, in order that the son might inherit their property. This plan was effected by giving the young girl to some Indians of Xicalango, and publishing her death, the body of a slave's child being substituted to deceive the people. The Xicalango Indians sold the girl to others in

Tabasco, and thus she came to be among the twenty slaves presented to Cortes by the cacique of that province. Marina, in the distribution of these women, fell to the share of Puertocarrero. When Jeronimo de Aguilar joined Cortes, it was found that he could speak to Marina in Maya, which closely resembled the language of Tabasco, and, as her mother tongue was the Mexican, it came about that, in treating with envoys from the interior and during the march through Tlascala and Cholula to the capital, Cortes spoke in Spanish to Aguilar who spoke in Maya to Marina who spoke with the Mexicans in their own tongue.

Her family name was Tenepal, and her Indian name was Malinal, derived from Malinalli, which is the sign of the twelfth day of the Mexican month; thus her Christian name in baptism, which was Marina, was really derived from, or suggested by, her Indian name, and as the Indians could not pronounce the letter *r* there was practically no change of name, save that in her new and important position they gave her the *tzin*, which was a title of respect, and henceforth she was called Malintzin. The Spaniards corrupted this into Malinche. Cortes came to be universally known as Captain Malintzin or simply Malintzin, and to thousands of Indians, he had no other name than that of this slave girl (Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. v.).

Doña Marina, as the Spaniards called her, was quick at learning Spanish, which her intimate relations with Cortes facilitated, or, as Prescott poetically puts it, "because it was the language of love." Perhaps it was on her side, but there is little evidence to show that it was on his. Marina was cherished because she was useful, not because she was beloved, and the circumstances forced her into intimate relations with Cortes, which were also favoured by her beauty and her superior wit. *Aussi bien celle-ci qu'une autre* was doubtless his view of the sentimental side of his relations with her.

After Puertocarrero's departure with the despatches and treasure, Marina reverted definitely to Cortes. Once the expedition had left the coast provinces, she became more and more indispensable, as Aguilar spoke no Mexican and the Maya language was not intelligible to the Mexicans. As soon as she had sufficiently mastered Castilian to be able to dispense with Aguilar as an intermediary between herself and Cortes, her position became a dominant one and she held the fate of the Spaniards in her hand. But most of all was she supreme over her own people and dispensed peace or war at her pleasure; for she alone could shape the results of the negotiations and treaties between Cortes and the caciques. Thus, an unforeseen turn in Fortune's wheel raised this princess from the degradation of slavery into which an unnatural mother had delivered her, and landed her in the Spaniards' camp, where she became the mistress of a nation's destinies. She showed herself so able, that Bernal Diaz affirms that they all held her to be like no other woman on earth, and that they had never detected the smallest feminine weakness in her; she alone of all the women was saved from the tragedy of the *Sorrowful Night*, and she

saved herself. There is no way of knowing how faithfully and disinterestedly she played her part of interpreter; certainly she gave herself absolutely to Cortes, and her devotion to the Spaniards never faltered, but who shall say that she also did justice in her presentation of the Indians' claims and interests in the negotiations she directed ? Authorities differ as to the number of children born to Cortes and Doña Marina; the eldest son, Don Martin, afterwards became a Knight of Santiago, and the existence of at least one daughter seems to be sufficiently certain. In October, 1524, Marina was married to Juan Xaramillo, described as an *hildalgo*. Bernal Diaz says that the bridegroom was ignorant of Marina's past, which makes one wonder where he came from, and Gomara's explanation that he was drunk at the time sounds more plausible. On the expedition to Yucatan there was a dramatic encounter between Doña Marina and her perfidious mother and the younger half-brother in whose interest she had been sacrificed. The recognition seems to have been instantaneous and mutual; the mother, fearing vengeance, threw herself at her daughter's feet, begging forgiveness, which was accorded, with the philosophic assurance that when she had so treated her child, she did not know what she was doing (as indeed it appeared), and that she thanked God for the boon of the Christian religion and the happiness of having given her master a son and the joy of possessing an excellent husband in Juan Xaramillo. Doña Marina's Christian morality betrayed it's recent adoption and weak growth at this point. She loaded her relatives with gifts and sent them home rejoicing. Bernal Diaz was reminded by this incident of the meeting between Joseph and his brethren in Egypt. Xaramillo became an *alcalde* in Mexico, and in 1528 a grant of land was given to him and his wife near Chapultepec. Prescott describes Marina as returning to her native place, where an estate was given her, but Icazbalceta says she ended her days in Mexico, rich and respected; Orozco y Berra concedes that she was rich, but doubts that she was respected. A curious painting represents Cortes with Marina standing beside him at the execution of a Cholulan servant of Andres de Tapia, who was condemned to be torn to pieces by fierce dogs; she piously holds a rosary in her hand as she watches the brutal spectacle, which took place in 1537. Doña Marina still lived therefore in 1537, but the date of her death is not recorded (Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.* lib. xxxiii., cap. i.; Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indians*, lib. iii., cap. cxxi.; Clavigero, tom. iii., [p. 12; Bernal Diaz, cap. xxxvii., Garcia Icazbalceta, *Dialogos de Cervantes;* Orozco y Berra, vol. iv., cap. v.).

APPENDIX II.

MEXICO-TENOCHTITLAN

The migratory period of the Aztecs in the valley of Anáhuac came to its close with the foundation of Mexico–Tenochtitlan in 1325. The name Mexico signifies habitation of the god of war, Mexitli—otherwise known as Huitzilopochtli. The name Tenochtitlan signifies *a cactus on a rock* and was given to the new city because the choice of the site was decided by the augurs beholding, perched upon a cactus plant which grew on a rock, an eagle with a serpent in its talons. The emblem of the cactus and the eagle holding a serpent became the national standard of Mexico, and is displayed in the coat of arms of the present Republic.

The two islands of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco stood in the salt waters of the lake of Texcoco, separated from one another by a narrow channel of water, and in the beginning, Tlatelolco had its separate chief; but in the reign of Axayacatl, the last king of Tlatelolco, called Moquihuiz, was overthrown, and the islands afterwards became united by bridges and formed one city, with a single ruler. The city was joined to the main land by three great causeways, so solidly built of earth and stone, and having draw-bridges to span the canals which crossed them, as to excite the admiration of the Spaniards. The northern causeway, from the Tlatelolco quarter, extended for three miles to Tepejaca, where stands the present shrine of Guadaloupe; the causeway reaching to Tlacopan (Tacuba) was two miles long, and the southern road, by which the Spaniards entered, extended for seven miles to Itztapalapan, with a division at the small fortress of Xoloc, where one branch diverged to Coyohuacan and hence caused Cortes to mention four causeways, which strictly speaking was correct. Robertson erroneously speaks of a causeway leading to Texcoco. While the width of these splendid roads varied, Clavigero says that all were wide enough for ten horsemen to ride abreast (vol. iii., lib. ix.). To the minute description of the city given in the letter of Cortes, it seems unnecessary to add anything; he says nothing, however, about the number of inhabitants, which all the earlier authorities practically agree in numbering at *60,000* households—by an obvious error the Anonymous Conqueror speaks of 60,000 people, which should, of course, be *families*. Zuazo, Gomara, Motolinia, Peter Martyr, Clavigero, and others, give this estimate, hence it may be safely stated, that the

city's population was not less than 300,000 souls; though Orozco y Berra, while admitting these figures, observes that considering the actual area and the large spaces occupied by palaces and public buildings, the people must have been a good deal crowded.

Very contradictory appreciations of the beauty of the Aztec capital, the grandeur of its buildings, and the merit of its architecture, have been given by different writers. Prescott's marvellous picture of the ancient city is familiar to all students of Mexican history, and hardly less well known and rivalling the American historian's delightful pages, are the chapters of Sir Arthur Helps, praised by Ruskin for their "beautiful quiet English," in which he compares Mexico to Thebes, Nineveh, and Babylon, among the great cities of antiquity, and to Constantinople, Venice, and Granada, among those of modern times, not hesitating to declare that it was "at that time the fairest in the world and has never since been equalled" (Hernan. Cortes, p. 108). The distinguished Mexican scholar Señor Alaman (*Disertaciones*, tom. i., p. 184) expresses his conviction that the city of Mexico contained no buildings of beauty or merit; that, aside from the royal palaces, the rest of the houses were adobe huts, amongst which rose the squat, truncated pyramids of the temples, unlovely to behold, decorated with rude sculptures of serpents and other horrible figures, and having heaps of human skulls piled in their court yards. He sustains this dreary appreciation by the argument that there would otherwise have remained some fragments of former architectural magnificence, whereas there is absolutely nothing. These eminent writers seem unwilling to allow that Tenochtitlan may have been a wonderfully beautiful city and at the same time have possessed few imposing buildings and no remarkable architecture. The descriptions of Mr. Prescott and Sir Arthur Helps are masterpieces of word-painting which charm us, but they are based upon early descriptions in which impeachable importance is given to architectural features of the city. It is, as Señor Alaman remarks, incredible that not a fragment of column or capital, statue or architrave should have been saved to attest the existence of great architectural monuments, even though 150,000 men were diligently engaged for two months in destroying the buildings, filling up canals with the debris and that finally, when the city came to be rebuilt, many idols and other larger fragments of temples were used in the foundations of the cathedral, which rose on the site of the great teocalli. Palaces, such as Montezuma's is described by the Spaniards, may be vast in extent, with beautiful courts, fountains, gardens, and audience halls, they may be luxurious and filled with curious and beautiful objects, but they add little to the picturesque or imposing appearance of a capital; the temples were sufficiently numerous, but none save the great temple seem to have been lofty, and even the principal teocalli had but 114 steps, so that its heighth was only remarkable by comparison with the great stretch of low flat-roofed houses about it. Cortes describes the destruction of the city, day by day, which he sincerely deplored as

necessary to subdue it, but he does not mention any one building which he sought to save, as he must infallibly have done, had he been burning an Alhambra or a Doge's Palace or been forced to blow up a Santa Sophia. It seems impossible that any one should seriously pretend that the waters of Texcoco's lake mirrored such façades as are reflected in the canals of Venice, or that there was a Rialto among the bridges, so hotly contested by the Spaniards. Orozco y Berra wisely reproves the comparison which Alaman draws between Mexico and Rome as notoriously misplaced. But, between the dazzling word pictures of Prescott and Helps on the one hand, and on the other Alaman's depressing sketch of a squalid town of hovels, inhabited by bloodthirsty cannibals, there is still room for a beautiful city in which dwelt a sovereign, amidst surroundings of interesting splendour.

Even without conscious intention to mislead, it was inevitable that the Spaniards should fall into exaggeration in describing the city of Mexico; first, because they necessarily used the same terms to portray what they saw as they would have used in describing Rome, Paris, or Constantinople; second, because the contrast between such Indian towns as they had seen and the capital was undoubtedly very great, and their long years of rough life, perilous voyages, and the absence at times even of shelter from the elements, made any large town with some system of order, with houses having court-yards, gardens and embroidered hangings, seem worthy to be compared with great cities elsewhere seen and dimly remembered; and lastly because Mexico was unquestionably a very beautiful city. It could hardly have been otherwise in such a situation, and the Spaniards, not stopping to analyse wherein its charms lay, fell into the easy error of attributing them to architectural excellence and grandeur, which were really wanting.

Solis adopts the conquerors' style, without having their excuse and, were he writing of the Courts of Leo X., or Louis XIV., he could hardly use other language than he does in describing Montezuma and his household.

The very ignorance and *naïveté* of the conquerors are good warrants for the truth of much that they wrote, for as they were illiterate men (even Cortes had but a scanty store of learning, gathered during his brief course of two careless years at Salamanca) without sufficient knowledge to invent descriptions of the Mexican laws, customs, religion, and institutions, the facts which they state, and in which they agree, are indubitable. The Aztec Empire possessed some highly developed institutions; to mention but one, there was the system of couriers or the post, which kept up daily and rapid communication between the capital and the provinces, and that at a time when no country in Europe possessed anything equalling it.

Their religion was established with a regular hierarchy, and a calendar of festivals, which were observed with a really admirable ritual, marred only by the barbarity of certain rites; their deities were gloomy

and ferocious, fear was the motive of worship, human sacrifice the only means of placating the gods, and thus religion, which should soften and humanise manners and elevate character, was engulfed in a dreadful superstition, which held the nation in a state of permanent degradation, with the result that the most civilised amongst the Indians of North America were at the same time the most barbarous. The perfect ordering of this system impressed the Spaniards, while its awful rites horrified them.

Their state was well ordered, and, in many respects, governed according to wise and enlightened standards, and that their civilisation was of no mean order is proven by the following factors in it:

I. The rights of private property were recognised and respected; its transfer was effected by sale or inheritance.

II. All free men were land owners, either by absolute possession or by usufruct derived from holding some public office in the state, and these composed the nobility: others held land in community, parcels being allotted to a given number of families, whose members worked them in common and shared their produce equitably.

III. Taxes were levied according to an established system and were paid in kind, thus filling the government store-houses with vast accumulations of all the products of the Empire.

IV. Justice was administered by regularly appointed judges, who interpreted the laws and exercised jurisdiction in different districts.

V. Markets were held as Cortes describes.

VI. The streets were regularly cleaned, lighted by fires at night, and patrolled by police; public sanitary arrangements were provided, and the city was probably more spacious, cleaner, and healthier than any European towns of that time.

VII. Public charity provided hospitals for the sick and aged.

VIII. Separate arts and trades flourished, and the metal-workers, lapidaries, weavers, etc., learned their trades by a regular system of instruction and apprenticeship pretty much as in the guilds of Europe.

IX. The great public-works, such as the causeways, aqueducts, canals with locks, and bridges, were admirably constructed, and, in the neighbourhood of the capital at least, were numerous.

X. There was a fair knowledge of the medicinal and curative properties of herbs, barks, roots, and plants, though, if the medicine men were skilled in the use of poisons, it seems strange that they did not rid themselves of the hungry invaders at some of the feasts which were constantly offered them.

XI. In the arts, the lapidaries, feather-workers, and silversmiths produced the best work. Mexican paintings, judged as works of art, are crude and primitive enough, but their real value

and interest lie in the fact that they are chronicles in *picture writing*, of which, unfortunately, too few have been preserved; ideas were rarely and imperfectly represented by this method, which was only serviceable for recording material facts. Music was the least developed of all the arts.

XII. Their solar system was more correct than that of the Greeks and Romans. The year was divided into eighteen months, of twenty days each, with five complementary days added, which were holidays, but were considered unlucky, especially as birthdays. For full information on the Mexican calendar, solar system, and astronomical science, the student is referred to Orozco y Berra. *Hist. Antiqua*, lib. iv., where these subjects are lucidly explained.

XIII. There we were regularly graduated social classes, the lowest being composed of peasant-serfs called *Mayeques* who were bound to the land; above them came ascending grades until we reach the Emperor at the top of all.

Three features characteristic of the feudal system everywhere are found: *A*. An overlord or Emperor, supreme in the central government, whose standard all followed in war and whose authority and person were regarded as semi-divine. *B*. Practically independent nobles or chiefs of tribes, levying their own taxes holding peoples and cities in subjection, transmitting their titles by right of inheritance and ready to contend with the Emperor himself on questions of etiquette, and precedence. Many of these were his kinsmen and all were allied amongst themselves, thus forming an aristocracy of rank and power. *C*. A people reduced to practical serfage.

Sumptuary laws prescribed the dress of the different orders, and the regulations governing court dress for different occasions were rigidly enforced; all removed their sandals in the emperor's presence, and even the greatest nobles covered their ornaments with a plain mantle when they appeared before him. The Aztec language was extremely polite and contained not only titles, but many ceremonious phrases of respect and expressions of courtesy and deference.

The crown descended in the same family, but a council of six electors, chosen during the lifetime of the sovereign, met immediately after his death and elected a successor from among the eligible princes of the royal family.

Alongside these indications of an advanced civilisation are found several others which show a nation still in its infancy:

I. They did not know the use of wax or oil for lighting purpose.

II. They used no milk.

III. They had no coinage: cacao nuts were commonly used as a standard of value and also gold dust put up in quills, but usually

commodities were exchanged. Sahagun mentions a sort of coin which the Mexicans called *quahtli* or eagle, but he does not describe it. Montezuma paid his losses at play with the Spaniards in chips of gold, each of the value of fifty ducats; this piece was called *tejuelo*, but it does not certainly appear to have been a coin.

IV. There was no system of phonetic writing.

V. They kept no domestic animals save rabbits, chickens, and little dogs, all of which they ate; and they had no beasts of burden.

VI. Their only cereal was maize.

VII. They knew neither iron, nor tin, nor lead, though the mountains were full of them, and their only hard metal was copper.

Even from the summary and incomplete indications here given, it is seen that the Aztec state possessed many excellent institutions and elements of an advanced civilisation, and, despite the co-existence of certain limitations which have led some to doubt the development claimed for them, our interest in the origin and history of the mysterious races of Anáhuac is stimulated to wonder and admiration for what we do know of their empire, and to boundless regret for the disappearance of all, save the few vestiges which remain to excite a curiosity they are inadequate to appease.

It is not required to endow Mexico with "the glory that was Greece or the grandeur that was Rome!" in order to admit that it was beautiful.

APPENDIX III.

ORIGINS OF MEXICAN CIVILISATION

The different tribes or nations of Anáhuac came, according to their several traditions, from the north-west, in a series of migrations, but of their original starting point they preserved no clear record. M. de Guigne presents proofs to show that the Chinese visited Mexico as early as 458 A.D.; Horn (*de originibus Americanis*, 1699), Scherer (*Recherches Hist.*), Humboldt (*Essai Polit.*) and other authorities, without a dissentient voice, assign an Asiatic origin to the Toltecs and other Mexican peoples. That Mexico received settlers from other parts of the world seems also certain. Aristotle (*De Admirandis in natura*) relates that Carthaginian sailors passed the Pillars of Hercules, and, after sailing sixty days to the west, reached a beautiful and fertile country, and that so many began to go thither that the Senate of Carthage passed a law suppressing such emigration, to prevent the depopulation of the city. The theory of the submerged Atlantis, and the arguments on which it rests, are too well known to require explanation.

The efforts to graft Mexican civilisation on to an Asiatic or African stock have not been entirely successful, for, while there undoubtedly exist points of striking similarity, these seem to be counterbalanced by still more important divergencies. The paucity of positive data or even coherent traditions has left a wide field open to speculation, of which many learned and ingenious seekers have availed themselves to the fullest extent, but without achieving results commensurate with their labours. Without attempting a thorough search into the racial origin of the tribes which Cortes found in the valley of Mexico, it may be briefly stated that the best evidence before us points to Yucatan as the centre of the highest American civilisation, from whence a knowledge of law, arts, and manufactures, and the influence of an organised religious system, spread northwards. The splendid ruins of Yucatan and Central America attest the existence of a race of people, which, whatever its origin, was isolated from European and Asiatic influence alike since an epoch which it is impossible to fix, but which was certainly very remote. This race—the Maya—possessed a civilisation, *sui generis*, and entirely unique on the North American continent, the focus of which had already shifted to the high valley of Mexico long before the Spaniards first visited the country in the sixteenth century

leaving the ancient cities of Uxmal, Palenque, Utatlan, and the others in the southern region, in ruins. What devastating influences produced this movement in an entire people is not known, and the length of time occupied by it, is problematical, though it must have extended over centuries, ebbing and flowing intermittently. The conflicting traditions as to the direction from which tribes, law-givers, and priests arrived in Anáhuac are doubtless owing to distinct movements at different times of the southern peoples in their wandering search for a new and permanent abiding place. These early migrations from south to north, were succeeded during the period commonly termed the Middle Ages, by a counter movement, and the descendants of the first Maya emigrants began to return southwards, conquering or absorbing the different peoples they encountered. Although some of the peoples had preserved much of the culture bequeathed them by their forefathers, there was no uniform civilisation existing among them, save in the case of the Toltecs, who seem still to have been in the full enjoyment of their Maya heritage.

The Toltecs left their country, called Huehuetlalpallan, in the vague north-west, in the year 554 A.D., and, after one hundred and four years of migratory life, they founded the city of Tollantzinco in 648, whence they again moved in 667 to Tula, or Tollan, from which date, their monarchy, which lasted three hundred and eighty-four years, is reckoned (Clavigero, vol. iv.). According to Torquemada, the Chichimecas followed within nine years after the extinction of the Toltec sovereignty, but Clavigero's calculation shows the improbability of this, for several reasons, the most convincing of which is the incredible chronology of their kings. Torquemada says that Xolotl reigned 113 years, his son lived to be 170, and his grandson 104 years old, while another king, Tezozomoc reigned 180 years! It is obvious that the Chichimeca period must either be shortened, or the number of kings increased. After the Chichimecas came the six tribes of Tlascala, Xochimilco, Acolhua (Texcoco), Tepanec, Chalco, and Tlahuichco, closely followed by the Colhuans or Mexicans, who first arrived at Tula in 1196, and, after several shorter migrations, finally founded Mexico–Tenochtitlan in 1325, as is related in Appendix II. of this letter. The last tribe to come was that of the Otomies in 1420. Boturini believed that the tribes of Xicalango and the Olemchs antedated the Toltecs, but says that no records or picture-writings explaining their origin were discoverable in his time. From the foundation of Mexico in 1325, the form of government was aristocratic till 1352, when according to Torquemada's interpretation of their picture-writings, the first King Acamapatzin, eighth predecessor of Montezuma II., was elected, and reigned for thirty-seven years.

The Aztec civilisation, which attained its highest development in Tenochtitlan and Texcoco, never reached the level of the Maya culture, nor did its cities contain any such admirable buildings as those whose ruins still delight and mystify the traveller in Yucatan and Central America.

Outside its few centres of learning and luxury, the numerous tribes under Montezuma's rule were dwellers in caves, living by the chase and in no way sharing in the benefits of the Aztec polity. In morals and manners, the Aztecs were inferior to the Toltecs, and though they adopted and continued the civilisation of their predecessors, they were devoid of their intellectual and artistic qualities, and turned their attention more to war and commerce as the surest means for riveting their supremacy on their neighbours. When Cortes arrived, Texcoco and Tlacopan, though still calling themselves independent, and ruled by sovereigns who held themselves co-equal with Montezuma, were rapidly sinking into a condition of vassalage. The Aztec religion was likewise of a militant order; it was polytheistic and readily admitted the gods of conquered or allied nations into its pantheon. Upon the milder cult of the older religious systems they had adopted, these devotees of the war-god speedily grafted their own horrible practices of human sacrifices, which augmented in number and ferocity until the temples became veritable charnel houses. With such a barbarous religious system draining their very life's blood, and a relentless despotism daily encroaching on their liberties, it is small wonder that Cortes was hailed as a liberator by the subject peoples of Mexico.

In the third chapter of his *Historia Antigua*, Don Manuel Orozco y Berra examines what he terms the two schools, the religious and the philosophical, whose teachings concerning the origin and early history of the Mexicans are based upon the interpretation of the ancient and authentic Mexican painting, now preserved in the National Museum in Mexico, and which came into the possession of the historian Ixtlilxochitl from his royal ancestors of Texcoco. The religious reading of this unique Chronicle (it is always Orozco y Berra who is my authority) sought to harmonise its chronology, and certain primitive events in the national history, with the biblical story, and all the early writers of this school, Carlos de Siguenza, Gemelli Careri, Clavigero, Veytia, and others, found in it an account of the creation, the flood, the tower of Babel, the dispersion of the nations, and other incidents of the mosaic records.

The philosophical school, of which Humboldt was the chief, following other lines, arrived, however, at a similar result, and connected the foundation of Mexico with the cessation of the deluge, and thus the problem of the origin of American races and animals was solved.

Don Fernando Ramirez, some time Curator of the Mexican National Museum, by showing the interpretation of both these schools to be mere illusions, demolished their conclusions, and interpreted the picture as merely representing the wanderings of the Mexicans in the valley itself, covering an area of about nine miles and a period of hardly more than 443 years, calculating from 1325 back to 882, A.D., the earliest chronological sign in the painting; while the water represented, is not the flood of but the neighbouring lake of Chalco.

The complex question of the relation in which the Maya and Toltec

civilisations stood to one another has not yet found a generally accepted solution. Working in the light which anthropology, ethnology, archæology, and kindred modern sciences afford, many valuable facts have been recently discovered and the investigations still proceeding, yearly contribute highly specialised knowledge to the sum of what the early Spanish writers amassed but failed to scientifically classify. But with all this, the path through the American historical labyrinth remains a tortuous one: whether the Toltecs preceded the Mayas and brought into Yucatan the high civilisation of which noble remains attest the existence, or whether this civilisation was of Maya origin and afterwards spread towards the north, influencing the Toltecs, are questions on which various opinions are held by modern investigators. I incline to accept the latter theory, but while such learned authorities are still at variance, it were presumption for a mere student of early American history to present conclusions.

In this brief summary of such a large subject, I have sought to furnish the general reader with an intelligible explanation of the origins and history of the civilisation which Cortes beheld when first he visited Mexico.

APPENDIX IV.

QUETZALCOATL

MONTEZUMA here refers to Quetzalcoatl who figures, under different names in different times and places, as a mortal man, as a deified legislator, and as a primitive divinity, so that it is difficult to separate the mythical in his history from the real. He was known in Yucatan under the name of *Kukulcan*, the meaning of which is identical with *Questzalli* and *Cohuatl*—a plumed serpent.

Quetzalcoatl was a Toltec deity, and was venerated as the god of the air, especially identified with the east wind, which brought the fertilising rains. As the teachings and prophecies attributed to him potently influenced the attitude of the Mexicans towards the Spaniards, on their arrival in the country, it is necessary to consider both his mythical and historical character. In the native mythology, Quetzalcoatl personified the principle of good in contradistinction to the principle of evil, under the figure of Tezcatlipoca. The story of his residence among the peoples of Anáhuac relates that he arrived at Tollan (Tula) the capital of the Toltecs, as chief of a band of strangers, from unknown parts, and that he was well received by the natives to whom he taught the arts of agriculture, metal working, architecture, and mechanics. He introduced also the new religious virtues of chastity, trust in one God, the love of peace, and the practice of charity and penance. He also brought the Toltec calendar to the state of perfection in which it was found amongst the Aztecs. He wore a white tunic on which were black or red crosses, which sounds something like a pallium. He was large of person, white faced, and wore his black hair and beard long. Exercising the high priesthood, he initiated the golden age of the Toltecs, during which the cotton grew in various colours, red, blue, orange, and purple, maize crops were over-abundant, the canes grew as large round as tree trunks, and pumpkins so big that a man's arms could not encircle one; nobody was ever hungry, animals were all tame, and the birds sang wonderfully. Sahagun catalogues him as the eighth king of the Toltecs. This halcyon period was brought to an end by the machinations of the evil spirit Tezcatlipoca who descended to earth on a spider's web, and, taking the form of a venerable sage, tempted, Quetzalcoatl beyond his strength, and made him drunk on *pulque*, during which orgies the god violated his vows of chastity. This fall shook the faith of his people and the

legend recounts further, that, in a war brought on by the same evil-spirit, the Toltecs were worsted. A universal famine followed upon the war, only to be succeeded by a terrible pestilence. Signs and portents foretold the destruction of the race, and Quetzalcoatl burned his house, buried his treasures in a secret place, and, despite the opposition of his adherents, left, called as he declared, by his master, to the mystic land of Tlapallan. His progress through the country was attended by prodigies and miracles until he reached Cholula, where he rested for twenty years, teaching the people, and pontificating in their great temple. But the enemy, hearing of this, prepared again to make war on the friends of Quetzalcoatl, who, to prevent this disaster, left with four disciples for the sea-coast. Here according to some versions, the waves parted, allowing him to pass, and according to others, he made himself a raft of serpents, and, spreading his mantle for a sail, was wafted away to the unknown east. Another legend describes him as causing his funeral pyre to be erected, from which his heart ascended into the skies, where it figures as the planet Venus.

The belief in his prophecy, that he or his representatives would one day return to re-establish and render triumphant his religious teachings, was wide-spread, and furnishes something of a parallel to the Messianic hope prevalent amongst the Jews, or to the expectation of a second visible coming of Christ on which the early Christians counted. He was to return as an avenger, and hence his coming was dreaded by the Aztecs, who believed in it so firmly that they carried on a cult to propitiate him, though their religious practices did violence to his humaner teachings.

The mysterious disappearance of the Toltecs from Anáhuac may have been caused by the war, famine, and pestilence, of this legend, and the remnant of the people may have made an exodus with their priestly leader, leaving their city to the victors, and thus might be explained the sudden disappearance of that people. While the material benefits which Quetzalcoatl brought to the Toltecs and Cholulans were readily enough assimilated, it is probable that his religious teachings were not widely diffused or properly understood by the mass of the people, and after his departure they rapidly became mixed with ancient superstitions. Christian doctrines became denaturalised and blended with pagan traditions, thus losing their significance and efficacy. The original, national cult of the Toltecs reasserted itself with the addition of some beliefs and ritual forms. The passage through Mexico of a few Christians under the leadership of one possessing the superior character and intelligence attributed to Quetzalcoatl would suffice to introduce new moral and religious ideas, and produce great changes in the beliefs of the more cultivated people; for the indubitable unity of all mankind is essentially a unity of spirit, which draws together widely diversified races, whose physical features are dissimilar, and whose customs are alien to one another.

Religion springs from an inherent aspiration, common to human nature everywhere, towards a knowledge of, and union with, what is divine and eternal. The development of this instinct carries humanity through the same phases according to laws governing religious evolution, which are universal. Asia, Africa, and ancient Europe, have produced religious systems, each with its myths, rites of sacrifice, practices of penance, vigils, ceremonial observances, and consecrated priests, and the conclusion seems obvious that within human nature itself are found the springs from which these various independent systems—identical in their intention but so different in their moral value—originate. Man is potential to respond to the demands of his own being, whether in the physical and material, or in the moral and spiritual order, and, although the organisation and development observed in primitive religions many differ widely in different quarters of the globe, yet wherever mankind dwells in community, religious development stands on the same foundation and proceeds according to the same fundamental law.

It need therefore in reality be no more astonishing that the Maya race and its descendants should have evolved a completely organised religious system, with an impressive ritual and a well-ordered calendar of ecclesiastical festivals, independently of any previous communication with the old world, than that they were found to have a knowledge of spinning, weaving, and metal working, and an effective system of civil government. All due allowance being made however for such considerations, the beliefs and practices of the Mexicans, which were so like Christian ones as to exclude the hypothesis of mere chance, were numerous and striking.

Duran says of their triune idol that "being one," he is adored under three names, and having three names, he is adored as one almost as we believe in the most Holy Trinity. The persons of this trinity were *Totec* the lord of the majesty and fear; *Xipe*, the man despised and persecuted, and *Tlatlauhquitezcatl*, the mirror of splendour. Children were baptized between three and twelve years—signifying a new birth—by pouring on of water to cleanse them from the taint of inherited sin; and auricular confession was practised for the forgiveness of sin committed, penances being imposed. Even their revolting human sacrifices seem to have been a degraded and materialised interpretation of our Lord's words of consecration when instituting the Eucharistic sacrifice, for the flesh of the victim was eaten reverently, while sacramental words were pronounced calling it the *food of the soul* and the *very flesh of the god* to whom the sacrifice was being offered. Holy water was used in many ceremonies, and especially at the crowning of kings. At stated times, a sort of passion play was performed in which a man was bound to a cross and killed with arrows. All these, and many other ceremonies bearing a striking analogy to Christian rites, much impressed the Spaniards, especially the friars, who composed a voluminous literature on the subject. Sometimes, indeed, theories were

built up on rather frail foundations of fact, and conclusions were reached by undue straining of the imagination rather than by the exercise of critical research. The Indians frequently misled their new teachers, giving such interpretation of their rites as they thought would be most acceptable, when not themselves ignorant of the real significance of their symbols and ceremonies; as, indeed, many poorly instructed Christians to-day could not explain intelligibly, to an inquiring visitor from Mars, the meaning of emblems and practices with which they are, nevertheless, familiar. But with every such allowance, there still remains a sufficient number of authenticated and perfectly understood doctrines and observances in the ancient Mexican cult, to argue convincingly their Christian origin; hence many writers have identified Quetzalcoatl with some unknown Christian missionary priest—possibly an Oriental bishop—while others have even thought he was the apostle St. Thomas. This startling opinion has not lacked eloquent defenders, but it is excluded from serious consideration by the fact that St. Thomas lived in the first century, and Quetzalcoatl in the tenth, without adducing others which conclusively disprove it.

The identity of Quetzalcoatl remains an unsolved mystery, and, after his departure, it became merged into that of mythical divinities, with a plumed serpent for his emblem. The confused notions which the Mexicans preserved concerning his life, his acts and miracles, and his final disappearance, and their interweaving of other legends of their more beneficent deities with his imperfectly transmitted doctrines, and the distorted facts in his personal history are no more extraordinary than many of the popular tales from lives of the saints, and other wonder stories which are cherished from generation to generation by ignorant and imaginative people everywhere. Unless some heretofore undiscovered treasure house of lost records delivers the key to the early history of the Toltecs, there seems little hope that our imperfect knowledge concerning him will receive any important additions. The systematic destruction of the picture writings of the ancient Mexicans, and particularly of everything connected with their religion, which was carried on for years with misguided zeal by the Spaniards, cut off the source from which fuller information might have been hoped. Much and very severe criticism has fallen upon the ecclesiastics—notably Bishop Zumarraga—by whom this sad destruction was accomplished, and the not unnatural vexation, with which historians view what now seems to have been a work of ignorant and unnecessary fanaticism, has lent undue vehemence to the blame assigned to these well-intentioned iconoclasts. The destruction is undoubtedly most regrettable, but, in strict justice, it must be admitted that the extent of the loss which American history sustained is entirely problematical, for we do not certainly know that the destroyed records contained anything which has not been learned from others which were preserved, and from the Indians themselves at the time of the conquest. On the other hand our debt to the friars is very great,

for to them alone is it owing that anything at all survived the Spanish conquest. They alone, amidst the hordes of gold-greedy colonists who scoured the country in search of mines and slaves, established humane relations with the Indians, learned their language, studied their records, and while bringing them into schools to teach them Christianity, learned from them all that could be discovered concerning their own religion, history, and traditions. Franciscans such as Sahagun, Torquemada, Motolinia, Landa, and Lizana, Jesuits such as Acosta, Duran, and later Clavigero—to mention some of the more notable amongst many workers—are the fathers of American history, to whose labours is due the preservation of an enormous mass of information—all we possess in fact—which would otherwise have perished irrevocably.

It may be safely assumed that little or nothing of importance which the Indians themselves knew escaped the researches which these and other men of their order conducted with patience and intelligence. Those among the early ecclesiastics in whom the critical faculty was wanting made good this lack by their diligence, amassing the materials which served later writers, to whom fell the task of assorting the confused historical lumber they had collected. It appears that the Mexicans knew surprisingly little about their own history, and that their trustworthy traditions did not carry them very far back. The Indians of Yucatan, in the time of Diego Landa, were unable to decipher the inscriptions on the ruined temples, and only the most vague and improbable legends concerning the buildings of their ancient cities survived amongst them. It does not seem, therefore, unreasonable to temper our impatience towards Bishop Zumarraga's act of vandalism by the reflection that the destroyed records would have probably furnished no link between the civilisation of Anáhuac and that of Yucatan and Central America.

Authorities consulted on Quetzalcoatl, Sahagun, lib. iii., cap. v.–xiv.; Torquemada, lib. iii., cap., vii.; *Motolinia in Icazbalceta* pp. 10, 30, 65; Mendieta, p. 82–98; Clavigero, tom. ii., p. 11–14; *Servando Teresa de Mier in Bustamante;* Orozco y Berra, tom. i., cap. iv., tom. ii., cap. iii.; Brasseur de Bourbourg, lib. ii., cap. iv., lib. iii., cap. ii. Charnay, *Ancient Cities;* Bulletins of Bureau of American Ethnology.

APPENDIX V.

THE TEMPLE

This statement is obviously inaccurate; Cortes has just said that fifty steps led to the summit of the chief *teocalli* which would allow for a very modest elevation, whereas the Giralda Tower of Seville Cathedral was built 300 years before Mexico was discovered and was then 185 feet high. Neither was it during this first visit to the temple of Tlatelolco in Montezuma's company that the idols were overthrown ; that event happened in the *teocalli* of the great temple on another occasion when Montezuma was not present. Most writers—including Prescott —misled by Cortes, have confused the two visits and the two different temples, but Bernal Diaz makes it perfectly clear that the first visit was to the temple adjoining the market place in the Tlatelolco quarter of the city. This temple was even loftier than the principal one, and the arrangements in both were essentially the same (Orozco y Berra, lib. ii., cap. iv.; Icazbalceta, *Dialogos de Cervantes*, p. 201). The great *teocalli* of the chief temple was completed in the form in which the Spaniards beheld it by Montezuma's grandfather, Ahuitzotl, in 1487, when the solemn dedication was celebrated by the sacrifice of a vast number of human victims, estimated by Torquemada at 72,344 (*Monarchia Indiana*, lib. ii., cap. lxiii.), by Ixtlilxochitl at 80,000 *Historia Chicimeca*), but more credibly fixed by the Tellerian and Vatican Codices at the still respectable figure of 20,000. Pretexts for wars with various tribes were invented in order to procure the victims for this ghastly hecatomb, and the ceremony of incessant slaughter occupied two days.

The exact form and dimensions of the temple are not positively known, but it is probable that the pyramid was an oblong, measuring something over three hundred feet in length at its base and rising in graduated terraces to a height of something less than one hundred feet. Bernal Diaz (*Hist. Verdad.*, cap. viii.,) says that he counted the steps, which numbered one hundred and fourteen, and this tallies almost exactly with the statement of Andres Tapia (*Relacion*, p. 582,) that he counted one hundred and thirteen steps. Bernal Diaz also measured the pyramids at Cholula and Texcoco in the same way, and counted one hundred and twenty steps on the former, and one hundred and seventeen on the latter, hence, if he was accurate, the great pyramid of Mexico was not the loftiest in the empire. Not one of the Spaniards who saw this

edifice seems to have observed it critically, or to have left a complete architectural description of it to posterity. They were all more impressed with the horrors they witnessed in it and their dreadful significance than with the architectural details; all agree that it was a most awesome place, in which dark, gruesome chambers, smelling like a slaughter house, contained hideous idols, smeared with human blood. In these dim recesses, demoniacal priests, clad in black robes, with grotesquely painted faces, framed in blood-clotted locks, celebrated their inhuman rites, and offered smoking hearts on golden salvers to the monstrous deities there enthroned. The presiding figure of this theocratic charnel house was that of the god of war Huitzilopochtli—the humming bird to the left—and of his image Bernal Diaz gives a careful description. Its face was distorted and had terrible eyes; the body was covered with gold and jewels, and was wound about with the coils of golden serpents; in the right hand was held a bow, and in the left a bundle of arrows. Suspended from the idol's neck was a necklace of human heads and hearts made of gold and silver with precious stones set in them, and by its side stood the figure of a page, called Huitziton, bearing a lance and shield richly jewelled. This little statue of the page was carried by the priests in battle, and was also on certain occasions borne with much pomp through the streets. The honours of these altars were shared by Tezcatlipoca—Shining Mirror—who was called "the soul of the world." He was a god of law and severe judgment and was much dreaded. His statue was of black obsidian, and suspended from his plaited hair, which was confined in a golden net, was an ear made of gold, towards which mounted tongues of smoke symbolising ascending prayers. On the summit of the *teocalli* stood a great cylindrical drum *tlapanhuehuetl*), made of serpents' skins, which was beaten on certain solemn occasions, and as an alarum. It is said to have given forth a most sinister sound, which could be heard for miles. During the siege, the Spaniards had sad cause to shudder at its fearsome roll which announced the sacrifice of their captive comrades, whose white, naked bodies were even discernible in the dusky procession which moved, in the glare of torches and the sacred fires, up the terraces of the pyramid on its way to the stone of sacrifice. The area of the courtyard, some twelve hundred feet square, was paved with flat polished stones, which were so slippery the Spaniards' horses could hardly keep their footing. Four gates in the surrounding wall, called *coatepantli*, gave entrance to the courtyard, one facing each of the cardinal points, and over each gate there was kept a store of arms in readiness for attack or defence. Sahagun (*Hist. Nueva España*, tom. i., p. 197) enumerates seventy-eight different buildings inside the wall surrounding the courtyard; they comprised chapels, cells for priests, fountains for ablutions, quarters for students and attendants, and a number of smaller *teocalli*. This tallies with the description of Cortes and Bernal Diaz, and makes it evident that the entire group of buildings somewhat resembled the Kremlin at Moscow,

or a vast cathedral close. In one of the temples the Spaniards estimated that a symmetrical pyramid of bones contained one hundred and thirty-six thousand human skulls. Amongst these temples there was one dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, circular in form and having its entrance built in imitation of a serpent's open mouth. Bernal Diaz says that this was a veritable hell, or abode of demons, in which they saw frightful idols, cauldrons of water in which to prepare the flesh of the victims, which the priests ate, and furnishings like those of a butcher's stall; so that he never called the place other than "hell."

Human sacrifices and cannibalism were practised even in honour of the beneficent deity of the Toltecs, whose mild teachings, pure life, and aversion to war, persuade us that he must have been a Christian bishop. Nothing more conclusively proves that, in spite of their material prosperity, their extended empire, and a certain refinement in their social life, the Aztecs occupied a much lower moral and intellectual level than did their Toltec predecessors in Anáhuac. From the Toltecs they had received the foundations of their civilisation; all that was good in their religion or true in their philosophy, all that was known amongst them of science, they received from that mysterious race whose only records are a few neglected and almost unknown ruins.

After the conquest, the great temple was razed to the ground. In its foundations were found a quantity of treasures, which had been placed there as offerings when the pyramid was first begun. The stone idols and carvings were for the most part built into the foundations of the Christian cathedral which stands upon its site.

Montezuma had readily assented, very soon after the arrival of the Spaniards, to the installation of a chapel in the Spanish quarters, and a room was consequently prepared, in which mass was said daily, as long as the supply of wine held out. The soldiers said their daily prayers before the cross and the sacred images, especially at the hour of the *Ave Maria*.

While seeking for the best place to erect the altar in this room, Alonso Yañez discovered a concealed door, which Cortes, who was informed of the discovery, ordered to be forced open. Beyond was a vast chamber containing the treasure of Axayacatl and other Aztec kings, forming a great heap of gold and jewels in the centre of the room, while all the walls were covered with splendid stuffs, thick feather-work, shields, and other objects of precious metals. After inspecting the fabulous collection, Cortes had the door sealed up again, and cautioned his followers not to betray their knowledge of its existence to the Mexicans (Bernal Diaz, cap. xciii.). Andres de Tapia's account (Incazbalceta, *Doc. Ined.*, tom. ii., p. 580) says that Cortes told Montezuma of his discovery, and that the emperor presented him with all the gold and jewels in that treasury.

After repeated conversations with Montezuma on religious subjects, none of which seemed to advance his conversion, the patience of Cortes

gave out, and it was when the Spaniards had been about five months in the city that the destruction of the idols in the great *teocalli* took place. The scene in the temple is characteristic of the times and the man.

Human life was cheap in Cortes's eyes, and the cruelties inflicted on the natives in the furtherance of his designs show that it was not the inhumanity of the sacrifices which filled him with the most abhorrence. It was the sight of idolatry, of people given over to devil worship, that inflamed his Catholic blood, and there seems, on this occasion, to have been no friar Olmedo at hand to restrain him, as in Cholula. He first called the priests together and delivered a pious exhortation, explaining the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and other Christian beliefs, conjuring them to abandon the superstitions which imperilled their immortal souls, to purify the altars, and dedicate them to the true God and the saints. As the priests defended their own, the controversy enraged Cortes beyond control, and seizing an instrument he began smashing the idols right and left with such magnificent fury that Andres de Tapia declared that he seemed like a supernatural being. Montezuma was notified, and entreated him for prudence's sake to desist, as such profanation would provoke an uprising of the people. Cortes, however, was deaf to remonstrance, and the idols were cast out, the temple washed and put in order, two altars being set up, one to Our Lady and the other to Saint Christopher, with their respective statues upon them. Mass was thenceforth said there, and some of the Indians came to the ceremony, as they wanted rain and, their own gods being overthrown, they were willing to invoke the Spaniards' God. Cortes declared they should have rain, and, with the most confident faith, ordered prayers and a procession to obtain this blessing; although the procession set forth under a cloudless sky, it returned after Mass in such a downpour that the people waded ankle deep in the streets. Malintzin's religion was vindicated (Andres de Tapia *Relacion*, p. 584–6).

APPENDIX VI.

MASSACRE OF THE MEXICAN NOBLES

This was Pedro de Alvarado. Simultaneously four messengers arrived from Montezuma to complain that the captain had ordered an unprovoked attack upon the Mexicans during a religious festival, and that the latter had merely defended themselves as best they could. The feast of *Toxcatl* fell upon the tenth of May, and only the highest and noblest adorned with their richest ornaments, but unarmed, took part in the ceremonial dance. Cortes had consented, before he left Mexico, to the usual celebration, with the proviso that there should be no human sacrifices, though very likely the priests reserved their intention to perform that part of the rites privately. The first contrariety arose from Alvarado's refusal to allow the statue of Huitzilopochtli to be restored to its former place, from which it had been ejected to make room for the altars to the Blessed Virgin and St. Christopher. The Tlascalans next excited his suspicions that the festival was merely a pretext to collect a large multitude in the city, the real object being to fall upon the diminished garrison and exterminate it. On the day of the feast, Alvarado and others saw certain idols, decked out for the procession, standing in the court of the temple, and also three youths in new robes and with shaven heads, which indicated that they were destined for sacrifice. Alvarado seized the intended victims, and, by putting them to worse tortures than those of the sacrificial stone, under which one of them died, he obtained such testimony as he wanted from the other two, who were mere lads, to prove that a general revolt was planned. What these poor creatures could be supposed to know of such conspiracies does not appear, but Alvarado was satisfied, and, arming his men, he left some in charge of Montezuma, with orders to kill the nobles who were with him, and repaired with the others to the great *teocalli*, where six hundred nobles and priests were dancing, while some three thousand others assisted as spectators. The appearance of the Spaniards caused no interruption, but, at a given signal, they drew their weapons and fell upon the defenceless people, slaughtering them without quarter; the doors were guarded, so few escaped, but they gave the alarm and roused the city. Meanwhile the nobles of the court had been slain, and the Spaniards had fortified themselves inside their quarters. The exact place where the dance took place is uncertain, as neither Cortes nor Bernal Diaz mentions

it; Acosta contradicting most of the early writers, argues that it must have been the court of the palace where Montezuma was. It nowhere appears, however, that Montezuma was present, and, as the dance was a religious rite, the temple court would seem more indicated for its celebration. Alvarado, who was wounded on the head by a stone, appeared before Montezuma crying: "See what your subjects have done!" but the Emperor answered that had he not begun the disturbance the Mexicans would have remained peaceable, adding, "You have undone yourself and me." Nor did Alvarado's explanations satisfy Cortes, who openly showed his anger upon his arrival.

Indeed, his conduct seems destitute of any reasonable excuse, and his efforts to exculpate himself at his trial were weak and confused; at best he had but the word of a captive, an intended victim, and that wrung from him under torture. Replying to Art. IV., of the accusations against him he alleged, (1) that it was common report in the city that, during Cortes's absence, the reduced garrison would be crushed; (2) on the morning of the festival he had seen a large number of sharp pointed sticks, with which the Mexicans openly boasted they would kill him and his men; (3) the admission of the captive victim, which was confirmed by a native of Texcoco; (4) that a skirmish had already taken place in the palace, in which he himself was wounded, and one Spaniard was killed, and that all would have shared the same fate. Torquemada adds the detail that huge cauldrons were prepared in which to cook the Spaniards. Las Casas advances the theory usual with him, that Alvarado wished to strike such a blow as would terrorise the Indians. Herrera admits that a revolt may have been brewing, but deprecates the wholesale massacre and the taking of jewels from the dead bodies. Clavigero scouts the idea of a conspiracy, and affirms that this was an invention to shield Alvarado. Oviedo, Sahagun, and Fr. Duran, all exempt the Indians of rebellious intentions. Setting aside the weighty unanimity of these authorities on the question of the alleged conspiracy, Alvarado's conduct would still be without justification, even had there been an intention to attack him, for his proper course would have been to collect all the Spaniards and Tlascalans in his quarters, with sufficient provisions, hold Montezuma and the court nobles as hostages, notify Cortes by messenger, and stand strictly on the defensive until help or instructions came. The situation cannot be properly paralleled with that of Cortes in Cholula, for the conditions were entirely different. Alvarado was the most violent of all the Spanish captains, and his brutality culminated in this inhuman massacre, which drove the long suffering Mexicans to desperation; it destroyed the last illusion about the celestial origin and character of the white men, and brought on the tragedy of the *Sorrowful Night*, and the siege, with its long train of misery and destruction. From that day forward, the Mexicans were deaf to all overtures from the Spaniards; regardless of suffering, and indifferent to death, they sought only vengeance.

APPENDIX VII.

DEATH OF MONTEZUMA

MONTEZUMA'S assurance to the people that he was not held a prisoner, but lived with the Spaniards from choice, free to come and go at his pleasure, was so contrary to obvious facts, and his reproof to them for taking arms, as though they had been the aggressors, was so unjust, that he failed to secure the cessation of hostilities. On the contrary, he had hardly finished speaking when the young prince Quauhtemotzin, who was one of the leaders of the people, reviled him as a coward and the effeminate tool of the Spaniards, declaring that his subjects renounced obedience to one who had so degraded his royal dignity. With that he hurled a stone, and, in the volley of missiles which followed, one struck the Emperor on the head (*Codex Ramirez* in Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. x.; Acosta, *Hist. Nat. y. Moral de las Indias*, lib. vii., cap. xxvi.). Clavigero refuses to believe that Quauhtemotzin so insulted his royal uncle, but offers no reason for his disbelief. The Spaniards, who had been charged to protect Montezuma's person with their shields, were not quick enough, and it is said he was also wounded by arrows in the arm and in the leg. The wounds were not, however, serious, but the unfortunate monarch was evidently determined not to survive this supreme humiliation, and, refusing to allow his hurts to be properly dressed, he remained without food in a profoundly dejected condition. Herrera describes Cortes as showing the greatest concern, solicitously visiting the Emperor to comfort him, but it seems little likely that in the midst of his perilous occupations the commander found time to condole with his wounded captive, for Montezuma's tardy efforts for peace had failed completely, and, though Prescott says that the Aztecs "shocked at their own sacrilegious act...dispersed, panic-struck in different directions...so that not one of the multitudinous array remained in the great square," there seems to be no authority for believing that any such dramatic revulsion of feeling took place. Montezuma had fallen from his royalty and his high priesthood, to be a thing of scorn and loathing to his people, while his influence on the course of events was less than *nil*.

Montezuma Xocoyotzin ninth king of Mexico died on June 30, 1520, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, the eighteenth of his reign, and in the seventh month of his captivity.

His death was attributed, by the Spaniards, to the wound caused

by the stone, which struck him on the head; by the Mexicans, it was on the contrary, asserted that he was put to death by Cortes. The *Codex Ramirez*, before quoted from the work of Orozco y Berra, states that Montezuma was found stabbed to death by the Spaniards, with the other chiefs who shared his captivity. Acosta accepts this as true, and Father Duran (cap. 76) says "They found him dead with chains upon his feet, and five dagger wounds in his breast, and with him many other of the chiefs and lords who were prisoners." Amongst the nobles were the kings of Tlacopan and Texcoco and the lord of Tlatelolco. Cacamatzin, according to Ixtlilxochitl was stabbed forty-five times, and he adds that Montezuma died from the wound in his head, "although his vassals say that the Spaniards themselves killed him, and plunged a sword into his fundament" (*apud*, Orozco y Berra, tom. iv., cap. x.). The murder of the other chiefs was deemed necessary, as it was neither possible to be burdened with them in the flight from the city, nor was it wise to release them. Their bodies were thrown out of the Spanish quarters at a spot called Teayotl, because of a stone turtle which stood there, in the hope that their fate might discourage the people, and also give them occupation in preparing their funerals as required by custom (Sahagun, lib. xii., cap. xxiii.; Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. Chichimeca*). Cortes's account of the wounding and death of Montezuma was naturally followed by Gomara; Oviedo also copies his words, and says that he heard the same account *viva voce* from Pedro de Alvarado; Herrera asserts that the emperor's wound was not mortal (lib. x., cap. x.), but that he died because he refused all attendance and food; and Bernal Diaz, who relates the same story, adds the affecting detail that Cortes and all the captains and soldiers wept as though they had lost a father (*Verdadera Hist.*, cap. cxxvi.), which those may believe who can. Clavigero refers to the grief of the Spaniards, as described by Bernal Diaz, and says that, in view of the contradictory accounts, it seems impossible to know the truth adding, "I cannot believe that the Spaniards would take the life of a king to whom they owed so many benefits, and from whose death they would derive only evil." He does not say why he cannot believe this; Montezuma's influence was gone; another leader had been chosen by the nation in the person of the brave Quauhtemotzin, and when Cortes announced his death, offering to deliver his body for burial they cried out: "We want Montezuma neither living nor dead!" (Herrera, lib. x., cap. x.) Hence the fallen sovereign's presence was only an embarrassment to Cortes, who was planning to fight his way out of the city with as few encumbrances as possible—even the precious gold was being left behind. The moment the emperor became an obstacle, his doom was sealed, and there was nothing in the character or conduct of Cortes which warrants the belief that he was influenced by sentiments of compassion for the king he had degraded, while his disposal of Cacamatzin at that time, and of Quauhtamotzin later in Yucatan, revealed the absence of any scruples whatever. Prescott joins Clavigero in his

generous assumption, and with a fine outburst of indignation finds it "hardly necessary to comment on the absurdity of this monstrous imputation." Such sentiments do credit to the magnanimity of these writers, for it is manifestly the nobler part to admit such a charge against Cortes, only when forced by irrefutable proofs, which in this case are not forthcoming. Orozco y. Berra, the results of whose exhaustive researches are expressed in calm, judicial language in his *Conquista de Mexico*, adopts the Indian version. Clavigero has perhaps said the most that generous impartiality will allow, when he states that "There reigns such variety among historians that it seems impossible to verify the truth." Torquemada (lib. iv., cap. lxx.) records that Montezuma's body was taken to Copalco where it was cremated, according to the Aztec usage, though the solemnity was marred by the insults heaped by some of the by-standers upon the hapless corpse. Herrera was of the opinion, that the body was buried at Chapultepec, because the Spaniards heard great lamentations in that quarter, and because that was the place of royal sepulture, but the observation of Clavigero on this opinion, that there was no fixed place for burying the sovereigns and that Chapultepec, being some three miles distant from the Spanish quarters it was hardly likely they could have heard lamentations, seems to weaken this assumption.

Diego Muñoz Camargo, the Tlascallan historian, would seem to be the chief authority for the pious legend that Montezuma was baptised by his own desire just before he died, and that Cortes and Pedro de Alvarado were his godfathers. Gomara asserts that the Emperor had expressed his wish to become a Christian prior to Cortes's departure from Mexico to meet Narvaez, but that the ceremony was deferred until Easter so that it might be celebrated with more solemnity, and was afterwards forgotten amid the confusion of the changed circumstances. The silence of Cortes on a matter he would have been eager to report in his letters, seems alone sufficient to dispose of the assertion, and Torquemada, who would also have not been slow to enroll a royal convert, does not admit the story (*Monarchia Indiana*, lib. iv., cap. lxx.). A most instructive dissertation on this subject is contained in an interesting study by Don José Fernando Ramirez entitled *Bautismo de Motecuhzoma* II., *Noveno Rey de Mexico*.

A pathetic figure is that of this Aztec king, gifted with some of the highest qualities of his race, venerated during a long and prosperous reign almost as a demi-god, only to be humbled to the very dust. The starting point of his downfall was his superstition, for had he listened to his generals rather than to his priests Cortes and his handful of adventurers would never have left the sea-coast alive. The misfortunes and humiliations of the last months of his life seem to have completely changed his character, so that from the time of his docile abdication at the bidding of Cortes, to the infamy of his appearance on the walls of the Spanish quarters to rebuke his long-suffering people, was but a

step on the way to the nameless grave where his dishonoured form was finally laid.

Prescott's description of the scenes of Montezuma's death-bed, with Cortes present to whom he confided his daughters, is based upon Cortes's own narration made in the grant afterwards conceded to one of the daughters, Doña Isabel, when she married Alonzo Grado, who is described in the same document as an *hidalgo* of Alcantara (Prescott, lib. iv., cap. ii.)

It is to Cortes's credit that he recognised the debt of the Spanish crown to Montezuma, and that he procured the royal protection for his children.

END OF VOLUME I.

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